NME
25 JANUARY 2014

Warpaint
Bombay Bicycle Club
Brett Anderson
Interpol

"When the storm clouds gather 'round you and heavy rains descend, just remember that death is not the end" BOB DYLAN

Lennon

His final album, 30 years old this week

How the Milk And Honey sessions woke sleepy John from his creative slumber

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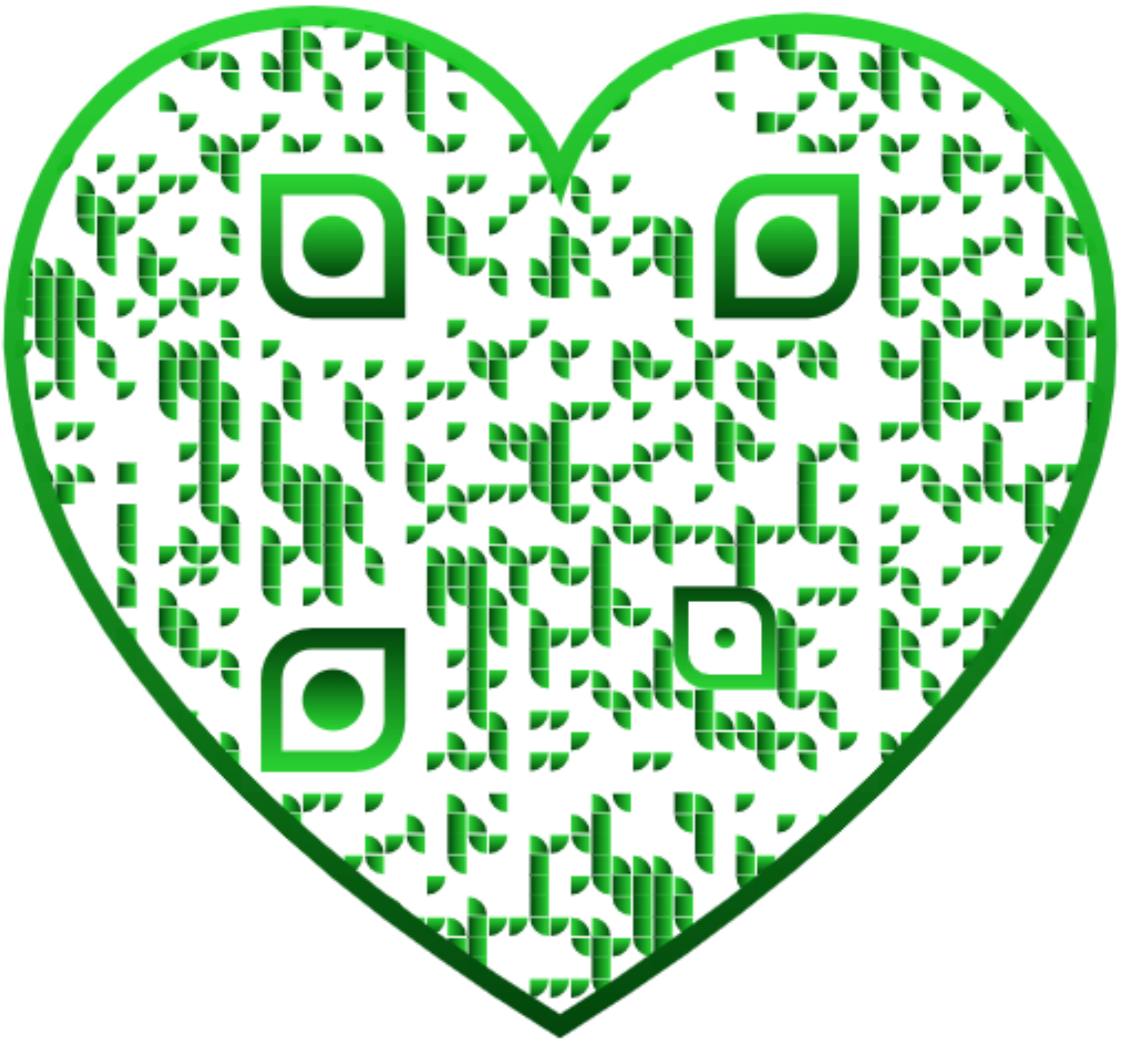

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Warpaint
Discovering that there may be a fifth member of the LA band called 'tension', Hazel Sheffield heads to Holland to find four musicians at once together and fractious

Manchester
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From The Vaults: Pavement, 1994
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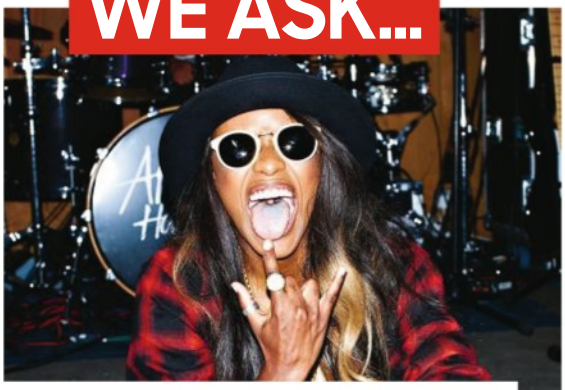

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CONTRIBUTORS

Dean Avisar
Photographer
Dean shot Warpaint in London: "If I had to describe them in one word, it's PURE. It's inspiring working with people who put their love for music first and express it in a natural way."

Mischa Pearlman
Writer
Mischa was at the closing of New York venue 285 Kent as it hosted Action Bronson: "The amount of sweat, heat and weed at this gig was just insane."

Simon Jay Catling
Writer
Simon explored the exciting scene in Manchester: "The city's not a musical theme park and it was a thrill exposing just some of the people who've fought against that."

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SOUNDING OFF

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Answering you this week: Barry Nicolson

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

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MY GENERATION

After listening to some of the new artists you have picked out to flourish over the coming year, I am left puzzled in one respect. While there is undoubtedly talent out there in 2014, there is a distinct lack of anyone willing to challenge and define the musical landscape for our generation in the same way as The Smiths did for the '80s, and Oasis did for the '90s. An over-reliance on social media, twinned with record labels who seem incapable of looking beyond the lining of their own pockets, appears to be having a debilitating effect on the ability for a young British band to seize upon a time of significant social unrest in order to carve their way into the annals of history. When is the guitar band of our generation going to appear?
Will Throp, via email

Barry Nicolson: Look, I know it sucks that guitars are currently about as fashionable as kipper ties, but where is it written that unto each generation there shall be born a group of spotty northerners bearing stringed instruments who hold the very fate of the world in their hands? Maybe that band will appear and maybe they won't, but if you perpetuate the idea that 'music' needs to be 'saved' by a new Oasis, all you'll end up with is another Viva Brother. The likes of Fat White Family (pictured above) may not fit the narrow, homogenised parameters of your typical 'guitar band', but they're doing stuff that's a thousand times more vital, weird and interesting.

THAT LONDON

I'll come straight out and say it: the last issue of *NME* depressed me. Why? There seems to be distinct lack of diversity in the locations of the British acts featured. Everywhere I looked it was London, London, London. Perhaps a smattering from Leeds or Liverpool, and the odd singer from down south, but not a Welsh band to be seen. I know from festivals like Sŵn and Green Man that there are tons of great Welsh acts, so why the aversion? As a musician living in Wales, I know it's hard to get noticed, due to this obsession with the capital. When are the music industry and press going to spread their wings a little and realise that not all good music comes from London, and that the newest groundbreaking act might just be in Cymru?
Andrew Noel, via email

BN: Sorry, Andrew, but you're just plain wrong in stating that there's "not a Welsh band to be seen" in our *Radar* issue – there's a two-page feature with Cardiff natives Joanna Gruesome. In fact, of the 29 bands featured, only seven hail from the capital; the others come from as far afield as Chicago, Melbourne, Missouri, the Philippines, Leeds, Brighton, Copenhagen, Vancouver, Birmingham, Massachusetts, LA, Liverpool, Glasgow, Bath, Blackpool and New York. You've certainly got a point about the music industry's myopic worldview, but it's not something that's reflected in our list.

EVERY DAY YOU LOVE HIM LESS AND LESS

I was interested to read Ricky Wilson's (right) reasons behind his decision to join the judging panel of *The Voice* in last week's *NME*. I respect his honesty about why he's doing it, but beyond the inevitable bump in sales for the new Kaisers album, I have a sneaking suspicion that this will end in tears: not only have the band lost their main songwriter, but their frontman has now sold himself out to a TV talent show that could charitably be renamed *The Z Factor*. Seems like a recipe for short-term gain and long-term disaster, no?
Katie Watson, via email

BN: So, nine years after admitting he'd happily pleasure a tramp for success, Ricky Wilson has finally struck his Faustian wank-pact, albeit with will.i.am instead of an actual homeless bloke. Good luck to him, I say: at this point, Kaiser Chiefs have little to lose and everything to gain from Wilson's decision, and it's not like they're betraying any long-held principles by doing it – they've been unashamed careerists ever since they changed their name from Parva. If those reports of a 179 per cent jump in demand for Kaiser Chiefs tickets are true, then you have to say the gambit has paid off.

TALKIN' 'BOUT A REVOLUTION?

Kevin EG Perry's piece about the lack of protest in the current musical climate made for sobering reading. I don't think every band has a duty to get up on their soapbox, but the increasing indifference of this generation of musicians is baffling. We live in an age of stringent austerity and historic social inequality – where are the John Lennons and Joe Strummers we need to rage against it?
Ben Hooper, via email

BN: From 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' to 'What's Going On' to 'It Takes A Nation Of Millions...', music has always reflected the tumult of the times, and it's sad that we seem to be losing that. I despair whenever I hear musicians say things like, "We don't know enough about politics to write songs about it." Since when did you need a poli-sci degree to get angry about something? Protest is about nothing more than knowing the difference between what's right and what's wrong, and it seems to me that it's pretty easy to look around at the mess we're in today and make that distinction. As a general rule of thumb, however, let's agree that you can literally never go wrong with calling the Tories cunts, and take it from there.

LOOK WHO'S STALKING

I met Miles Kane at Hull University after waiting four hours for him! He's the nicest man on the planet, I got a hug and he repeatedly called me 'love', and of course he looked absolutely perfect!
Antonia Stark, Hull

BBC PICTURES, ROGER SARGENT

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ON REPEAT

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Mac DeMarco
Passing Out Pieces

The party never ends for touring rock bands in the illegal download era, even when maybe they kinda want it to. If they stop, they're broke. Canada's Mac DeMarco is cooler than a frozen margarita but even he finds this knackering, and he assesses the damage on this first taste of third album 'Salad Days'. It's a scuzzier version of John Lennon's 'Watching The Wheels', and is brilliantly, painfully honest. He's paid the cost, now he's the boss.
Kevin EG Perry, writer

2. Future Islands
Seasons (Waiting On You)

On the opening track from their imminent fourth album, Baltimore synth-pop trio Future Islands keep their dreamy sound intact on a song that's more upbeat than anything on 2011's 'On The Water' record. 'Seasons (Waiting On You)' sounds a little like Elton John singing Daft Punk's 'Fragments Of Time', and boasts pleasingly poetic lyrics about the passing of time, and love slipping through your fingers.
Andy Welch, writer

3. The Family Rain
Vulpicide

'Vulpicide' – the act of killing a fox – would initially seem to be the least Morrissey-friendly track title we've seen in a while, but the mercifully Walter brothers don't seem to be gunning for woodland creatures. "*We've been through all of this before/You're mine, not his, and I love you more*", growls frontman William over stormy guitars and relentless drums. This is The Family Rain on killer sleazy form.
Lisa Wright, writer

4. The Anchoress
What Goes Around

Paul Draper, one half of The Anchoress, is best known as the erstwhile frontman of Mansun, a band with enough lingering cult appeal to warrant a 2014 fan convention. Catherine AD, loosely gothic solo artist and The Anchoress (Draper's her co-writer) can't claim such notoriety, but the first offering of this new guise ushers in a whole new audience. Imperious vocals top a piano-led song that's equal parts prog and pop, oddball and accessible.
Noel Gardner, writer

5. Fat White Family
Touch The Leather

Fat White Family were so broke when recording songs to follow up celebrated debut album, 'Champagne Holocaust', they sent out an SOS on Facebook for Chinese food. Also on their minds were leather, sport socks and a warm sweater, as this excellent track makes clear. Very Cramps-like and extremely funny, 'Touch The Leather' is thicker sounding than the album, but still loose and trashy.
Phil Hebblethwaite, writer

6. The Dead Weather
Rough Detective

Jack White and Alison Mosshart's band continue the drip-drip of new material ahead of the release of a new album in 2015. Last month gave us the deliciously dirgy 'Open Up (That's Enough)', and now there's this gut-punching number. White and Mosshart trade vocal calls, with his maniac croon a match for her guttural falsetto. Hip-grinding guitars, sludgy bass riffs, earthquake drums and cackling laughter – exactly what you want from this lot.
Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

7. Iggy Azalea
Animal Noise

Iggy Azalea's on the offensive again on 'Animal Noise, her first new track this year, and the singer from Mullumbimby in Australia is full of charm with lines like "*you look like Miss Piggy/We like 'where the hell is Kermit?*". She's never been one to err on the side of decency, and her brash bars that are strung out over producer Bro Safari's offensively peaky bass monster will raise eyebrows at every turn.
Hayley Avron, writer

8. NO
Leave The Door Wide Open

So Los Angeles is all glorious sunshine, palm trees fluttering in the Pacific breeze and the happiest, hottest people in America blissfully chugging kale smoothies, right? Wrong. Shit gets gloomy in California too. Echo Park's NO respond to life's lower ebbs by creating a dazzling sort of doom, and splicing together gothic funk guitars, a soul-shuddering baritone vox and the kind of grubby melancholy Interpol excel at.
Leonie Cooper, writer

9. Howler
Don't Wanna

Jordan Gatesmith warned that his band's second album, 'World Of Joy', would be heavy with "bratty rock'n'roll". Sure enough, our first snippet is both a marvellously warm and nostalgic amble of Replacements-ish '80s punk balladry, and a manifesto of extreme petulance. Gatesmith couldn't sound more adorably surly and stroppy as he advises on all the things you totally don't have to do because, like, YOU NEVER ASKED TO BE BORN.
Emily Mackay, writer

10. School Of Language
Between The Suburbs

This is David Brewis from Field Music's dubiously named solo project, and it's rather lovely. Freebie download 'Between The Suburbs' is an idea of what to expect from the Sunderland man's second album 'Old Fears', out in April. With its fluttering synths and cuter-than-kittens falsetto, it's like Sugababes and Metronomy rubbing up against each other behind the local Co-op.
Kate Hutchinson, writer

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

▶LISTEN TO THEM ALL AT NME.COM/ONREPEAT NOW

11. Jenny Lewis
Completely Not Me (feat Rostam Batmanglij)

This beautiful, melodic pop gem was recorded with Vampire Weekend's Rostam Batmanglij for the new *Girls* soundtrack. Rostam's production techniques carry over from VW's last album 'Modern Vampires Of The City' with big drums and a few 'Step'-like vocal effects, but really 'Completely Not Me' is all about Lewis' crystal clear voice. Keep an ear out for it in the third season of Lena Dunham's TV show.
David Renshaw, News Reporter

12. Perfect Pussy
Driver

Fittingly, the waveform for 'Driver' looks a lot like a jagged cricket bat, a makeshift weapon to bludgeon and gash. The track swaps the enveloping warmth of the band's previous track 'I' and its radically positive perspective on cheating friends and lovers for a more erratic assault that plunders the tone of heartland rock and stitches it to hardcore. The only intelligible part of Meredith Graves' lyrics? "*I got everything I wanted while I DIE*".
Laura Snapes, Features Editor

13. LSA
No Good Man

On debut single 'More Or Less Equal', London quartet LSA displayed a fine example of Strokes-indebted intent. New track 'No Good Man' dishes out more of the same, with frontman Will White reminiscing on summer nights spent finding "*waistlines to hold*" and doling out advice to "*focus on something*". It feels like it could fall apart at any moment, but that just makes it more exciting.
Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

14. Angel Olsen
Hi-Five

Angel Olsen writes about the human condition with a rare intensity. "*I feel so lonesome I could cry, but instead I'll pass the time*", starts 'Hi-Five', a track from the Missouri-born singer's new album 'Burn Your Fire For No Witness', released next month. As the country rock rhythms and dirty guitars fade, Olsen sings "*are you lonely too?*" before the track's final throes burst with warmth and drift to the bittersweet pay-off: "*I'm stuck with you*".
Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

15. Real Estate
Talking Backwards

This first morsel from third album 'Atlas' – due in March – finds the New Jersey surf-poppers tacking a skiffly shuffle onto lush guitar lines that owe something to the soft psych of The Boo Radleys. It feels like it could float off in the breeze, but it's anchored by a pervasive sadness in the lyrics about the realisation that a long-distance relationship isn't going to work out. Real Estate are getting lovelier.
Matthew Horton, writer

16. Eagulls
Possessed

You can detect '70s post-punk band Killing Joke's fingerprints all over Eagulls' new single, as it has the same relentless rumble as KJ's classic track 'Eighties'. But it's also lifted by a bunch of soaring fuzz, and a coarse-as-they-come vocal from singer George Mitchell. Like everything else on the Leeds band's forthcoming debut album, out in March, it's not the nods to the past that stand out, but how they twist them into something snarling and new.
Ben Hewitt, writer

17. Liars
Mess On A Mission

'Mess On A Mission', the first glimpse of Liars' seventh studio album 'Mess', finds the twisted Krautrockers barking "*facts are facts and fiction's fiction*" over bleeping 16-bit synths, cold beats and spooling noise, like the soundtrack to an arcade game set in a grim dystopian future. With violent shades of cyber-punk and a huge chorus, it's mean and menacing in a way that only the Brooklyn-based trio can manage.
Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

18. Yacht
Plastic Soul

The headline news about 'Plastic Soul' is that it comes with a video that cost a mere $5,000 to film. In it, singer Claire L Evans stands in a room with a colourful wall and sings, "*Hey the world is old, but I am young and dumb and ride for free*" over beats from Jona Bechtolt that are slightly too slow to dance to. But that's Yacht, creators of electronic music that's delivered with the simplicity, innocence and glee of a child reading a nursery rhyme.
Tom Howard, Reviews Editor

19. Superfood
TV

The lead track to be taken from their first EP 'MAM', due in spring, 'TV' finds Blur-aping Brummies Superfood channelling Britpop nostalgia with rattling tambourines, screaming Graham Coxon guitars and frontman Dom Ganderton yelling about his addiction to the box. Unlike Blur, there's no coffee with this TV, just enough hooks to hang your entire wardrobe on. It's going to be a big 2014 for this lot.
Hazel Sheffield, writer

20. The Magic Gang
Shallow

Brighton newcomers The Magic Gang take the drunken guitars of Mac DeMarco and mash them with an altogether bitchy and aggressive howl. 'Shallow' thrives on account of its eeriness – particularly the bits where it all goes quiet before they sing about "*breaking the sun*" and a girl who "*looks insane*". It's as rough, raw and fresh as anything else on this list.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

JENN FIVE, TOM MARTIN, FILM MAGIC

On his own

Damon Albarn reveals details of his first solo album 'Everyday Robots', featuring Brian Eno and Bat For Lashes

It all started when a stark black-and-white teaser clip appeared online back in December showing Damon Albarn sat at a keyboard which announced simply that the Blur and Gorillaz frontman's first proper solo release would come some time in 2014. This week, he reveals full details of the eagerly awaited album. The record is to be titled 'Everyday Robots', and it was recorded at his west London studio, 13, with XL Records boss Richard Russell. The album features guest slots from Brian Eno and Bat For Lashes' Natasha Khan.

A video for the record's title track, which you can hear online now, is directed by Argentina-born, London-based artist and designer Aitor Throup, known for his stark imagery and imposing installations rooted in social and political issues. He also did the album's artwork, which features Damon's head recreated using CGI software.

More good news – Damon's also set to make a return to the stage, off the back of a run of Africa Express shows last year, headlining Latitude Festival in Suffolk on July 19.

■ JENNY STEVENS

▶THE DETAILS

▶**TITLE** Everyday Robots ▶**RELEASE DATE** April 28, 2014 ▶**LABEL** Parlophone ▶**PRODUCER** Richard Russell ▶**STUDIO** 13, London ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶Everyday Robots ▶Hostiles ▶Lonely Press Play ▶Mr Tembo ▶Parakeet ▶The Selfish Giant ▶You And Me ▶Hollow Ponds ▶Seven High ▶Photographs (You Are Taking Now) ▶The History Of A Cheating Heart ▶Heavy Seas Of Love

LINDA BROWNLEE

Damon Albarn pictured recently in Leytonstone, east London

All aboard the NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas

Interpol, Temples, Royal Blood and Circa Waves are set to hit a town near you

Paul Banks of Interpol, NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas headliners

Time to cast off those January blues, because the NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas is coming, and it's bigger and better than ever! It's a killer line-up of the best new bands around, alongside illustrious headliners Interpol – the NYC gloom-rock titans who are returning to the stage for the first time since 2011, ahead of the release of their as yet untitled fifth album.

In the much-coveted opening slot are hotly tipped indie-pop rapscallions Circa Waves. They're followed by Brightonian power duo Royal Blood, who promise to bring some "visceral rock'n'roll", according to singer/bassist Mike Kerr. Kettering psych upstarts Temples will offer their brilliant blend of '60s pop and '70s glam rock before Interpol in the top slot.

Interpol guitarist Daniel Kessler tells us what to expect from the headliners...

Are you excited to be headlining the NME Awards Tour 2014 with Austin, Texas, 11 years after your first appearance on it?
Daniel: "Very much so. It's gonna be a really nice way for us to get back out there again. We haven't played shows for a couple of years now, and this felt right. It's cool to come back on the tour on the eve of a new record."
What are your memories of that first tour with The Datsuns, The Polyphonic Spree and The Thrills?
"All the bands got along really well – there was a really strong camaraderie. We didn't know any of the other bands beforehand, but there was definitely a bit of a community vibe by the end, which you don't often see. In our downtime we all hung around together, and whenever we've bumped into those guys out on the festival circuit, it's always been really cool to catch up."
What advice would you give to your new tourmates?
"Have a good time! It's really that simple. It's a different sort of setup from doing your own show, but the crowds are always great, so just go out there and have fun."
Are you familiar with the other bands?
"Not really, no. I'm only hearing the names now, so I don't really have all the answers. But I'll be checking them out, definitely."
These are Interpol's first shows for more than two years. Are you itching to get back on the road?
"Yeah, I do miss it. We've spent the last year or so writing and recording, but sometimes when you're in the midst of that, you just wanna go out there and play the songs."
Can we expect to hear some new songs in the setlist?
"We're still mixing the record and we haven't got a setlist yet, so it's hard to know exactly how many, but we'll throw in a few tunes from the upcoming album, definitely. I don't know if we'll have a single out by then – but you never know!" ■

MEET THE SUPPORT

Circa Waves

How does it feel to be playing the tour?
Kieran Shuddall, singer: "We've always wanted to do it. I've gone as a punter a few times, and I remember thinking, 'How cool would it be to be on this tour?' And now I'm doing it!"

Royal Blood

Where are you most looking forward to playing?
Mike Kerr, singer/bassist: "London, because Brixton Academy is such a legendary venue – and it's quite close to Brighton, so all of our friends can come. It will also be the biggest gig we've ever played, so it'll be a milestone for us."

Temples

What's the one item you can't live without on tour?
James Bagshaw, singer/guitarist: "A knob of ginger. What for? I can't tell you! All I can say is that it's good for you."

Tour dates

March 18 Glasgow O2 Academy
March 19 Leeds O2 Academy
March 20 Manchester Academy
March 22 Liverpool O2 Academy
March 23 Nottingham Rock City
March 25 Birmingham O2 Academy
March 26 Bristol O2 Academy
March 27 London O2 Academy Brixton

Tickets

Ticket pre-sales begin at 9am on Wednesday, January 22 at NME.COM/tickets. Tickets go on general sale from 9am on Friday, January 24. The ticket price includes a 50p donation to Teenage Cancer Trust.

STAR PICK

Nominees' own choices for this year's gongs

Bryce Dessner

The National

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND
"I'd want Arcade Fire to win. They're such a trailblazing band. Their output is incredible and they're really important in the industry in reinventing the way things can be done."

BEST LIVE BAND
"Queens Of The Stone Age. It's the loudest and most ferocious thing you've ever seen. Josh Homme is a force of nature. Maybe one day we'll ask him to help us sound that awesome."

BEST FESTIVAL
"Latitude. We headlined a few years ago. It's in such a beautiful part of England – it's what Americans dream English countryside is like. Plus it has awesome bands, literary readings, authors and orchestras. It's really diverse."

BEST TV SHOW
"I'd have to go with *Game Of Thrones*. Matt [Berninger, frontman] sang in an episode so we got to go to the set in Belfast and some of the cast and creators came to our show."

BEST REISSUE
"The Breeders, 'LSXX'. The Breeders are from Dayton, Ohio, like us. Kim and Kelley Deal were goddesses for our generation. Everyone had an indie teen crush on Kim. 'Last Splash' has so many good songs."

HERO OF THE YEAR
"Lou Reed. He's the ultimate American rock star. He wrote such good songs and influenced everyone from the punk movement to Bowie to indie rock."

REDFERNS, ANDY FORD, GETTY

Greenwich lean times

The Coen brothers' new film *Inside Llewyn Davis* tells the story of a New York folkie – with help from Marcus Mumford

Oscar Isaac as Llewyn Davis in the Coen brothers' film

Since its premiere at the Cannes film festival last May – where it picked up the prestigious Grand Prix award – music and film fans alike have been eagerly de-fluffing their black beatnik sweaters ahead of the general release of *Inside Llewyn Davis*. A frontrunner for Best Picture at this year's Academy Awards, the Coen brothers' darkly comic treatise on the Greenwich Village folk scene of the early '60s comes to UK cinemas on January 24. It sees Oscar Isaac playing the titular singer-songwriter as he tries to come to terms with the suicide of his singing partner. It also contains the glorious sight of Justin Timberlake rocking a righteous beard and cardigan combo.

With regular Coens collaborator T Bone Burnett on board as musical supervisor, the soundtrack is a potted history of the early days of New York's folk revival, mixing original and classic recordings. Among them are songs by the late Dave Van Ronk, who in part inspired the film's fictional protagonist, and new recordings by Bob Dylan. "The Coens are the Dylan of filmmaking in a lot of ways," says Burnett. "They operate in the same way Bob does [in his lyrics]. They take parts of history and legend and stories we know."

Marcus Mumford, husband of the film's female lead Carey Mulligan, is another of the contemporary voices on the soundtrack, alongside bluegrass band Punch Brothers. "Marcus is a soulful cat," says Burnett, who produced Mumford & Sons' performance with Bob Dylan and the Avett Brothers at 2011's Grammy Awards. "We remained friends and then when Carey got cast he called up and said, 'Can I come make tea?'". Mumford ended up co-producing the soundtrack and providing the voice of Llewyn Davis' late singing partner.

Marcus Mumford

"THE COENS ARE THE DYLAN OF FILM"
T Bone Burnett

The real revelation of the movie is Isaac, up until now best known for his role as Carey Mulligan's husband in *Drive*. His musical chops were honed in a ska-punk band called The Blinking Underdogs, who shared bills with the likes of Green Day. "I had blue hair and a blond goatee," he says with a smirk, though he left the band in the early 2000s to study drama. It wasn't until he was cast by the Coens that he made a return to public performance, finding himself recording alongside two of the world's biggest singers – Mumford and Timberlake – in the historic Avatar Studios in Manhattan. "The Village of the 1960s was being recreated in that studio. It was about a community of people," says Isaac of the week-long soundtrack sessions.

T Bone Burnett

Isaac ended up back onstage last year at New York's Town Hall at a star-studded *Inside Llewyn Davis* charity concert. "It was one of the most terrifying moments of my life. Patti Smith had just gone onstage; Jack White was there," recalls Isaac. "Even Joan Baez said, 'I've never experienced anything like this.'" The veteran folkie – and ex of Bob Dylan – was later seen instigating a hoedown at the Bowery Hotel afterparty. Proof that the old guard still know how to have a good time in Manhattan.

■ LEONIE COOPER

▶Turn to page 31 for NME's review of *Inside Llewyn Davis*

THE NEW YORK FOLK SOUND

Five LPs to whet your appetite for *Inside Llewyn Davis*

Bob Dylan
'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' (1963)

The album that bought global attention to the scene centred around Washington Square Park has both simple, touching love songs and fiery political polemic.

Dave Van Ronk
'Inside Dave Van Ronk' (1963)

Inside Llewyn Davis borrowed its title from Van Ronk's low-key collection of heartfelt and gutsy traditional folk songs and ballads.

Joan Baez
'Joan Baez' (1960)

Baez's debut album of traditional covers marked out the 19-year-old as an unpretentious and gifted young talent.

Phil Ochs
'I Ain't Marching Anymore' (1965)

The second album from counterculture icon Ochs encompassed protest songs and poetry. He committed suicide in 1976.

Pete Seeger
'We Shall Overcome' (1963)

Recorded live at Carnegie Hall, Seeger was the father of the Greenwich Village scene. Still playing, he turns 95 this May.

GETTY

Jet set

Bombay Bicycle Club frontman Jack Steadman travelled the world to get inspiration for the band's daring, Bollywood-fuelled fourth album. He talks us through his holiday snaps...

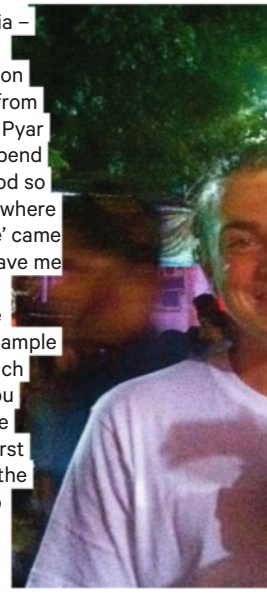
Bombay Bicycle Club's new album 'So Long, See You Tomorrow' (released on February 3) is an adventurous record, musically and geographically. It's packed with exotic rhythms and arrangements, written while frontman Jack Steadman was journeying around Europe and Asia, sometimes joined by his bandmates. Last year, when they were all back in Britain, they turned these adventures into their fourth LP. Here he talks us through the people and places that inspired the album, from Dutch hi-fi nuts to Turkish Roma wedding bands.

India

"Three tracks on the album – 'Overdone', 'Feel' and 'Come To' – were started when I was in India – I stayed on after a festival.

"'Overdone' is the first song on the album, and uses a sample from a Bollywood song called 'Apne Pyar Ke Sapne'. Before I go away I spend loads of time loading up my iPod so I've got a good soundtrack for where I'm going. 'Apne Pyar Ke Sapne' came up on shuffle one day, which gave me the idea for 'Overdone'.

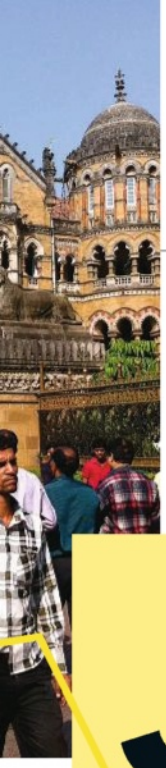
"You might think it would be difficult to apply a Bollywood sample to our music, but there's so much melody in a Bollywood song you can apply it to anything, they're incredible pop songs. On the first demo of 'Overdone' there was the sample with a massive hip-hop beat underneath it. I called it 'Hindustanye West'."



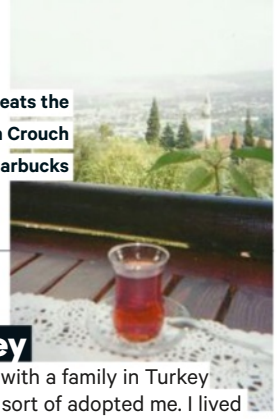
Amsterdam Bicycle Club? Bassist Ed Nash after the gig in the Netherlands

The Netherlands

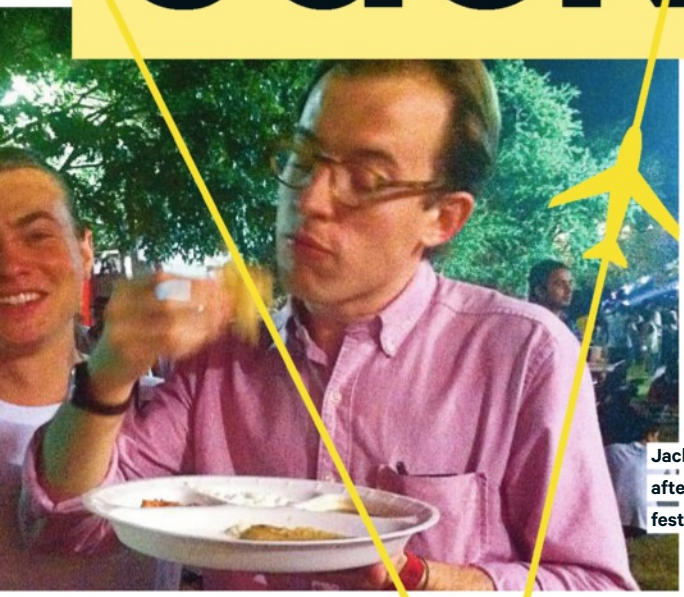
"This was the trip that started it all. I went to a place called Nijkerkerveen after a gig we had in Amsterdam. I'd only been to the big cities in the Netherlands before so I wanted to avoid that. I set up a studio and I wrote 'Carry Me' and 'It's Alright Now' there. I like travelling alone, but I stayed with families so they'd invite me for dinner. The dad of one family was a real hi-fi enthusiast with hundreds of speakers and played me all sorts of records. I was inspired by the '70s prog – like Traffic – he played. Listening to it made me want to make everything sound perfect when I got to the studio."



Sure beats the view from Crouch End Starbucks



Jack



Jack with Ed after an Indian festival gig

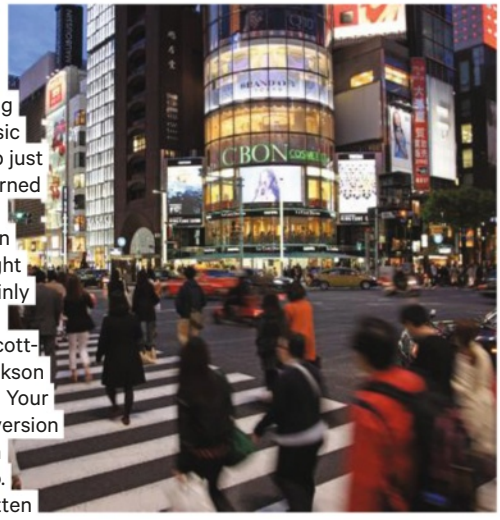
Turkey

"I stayed with a family in Turkey and they sort of adopted me. I lived in this guest room they had at the back of their house, and they were very confused about why I was there and what I was doing. The guy there considered himself the main man of the village and I asked about getting a drumkit so he took me off to borrow one. We drove to this Roma camp to pick it up and there was a wedding band using it. I stayed there for a bit and watched the concert – all the musicians were incredible. The drumkit, though, was the worst bit of equipment I've ever seen. Back at the house, the family would come to listen to what I was doing each day and they'd dance around, although they didn't understand any of the words.

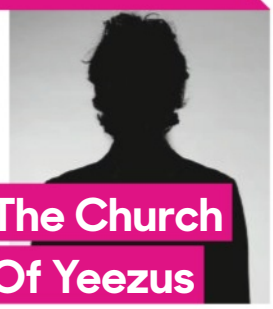
"I started writing 'So Long, See You Tomorrow' in Turkey. I was in Sapanca, about a two-hour drive east of Istanbul. Each morning I'd get up and have breakfast in a café that was built into the mountain with a view over the valley with mosques dotted along the hill. It was beautiful, so the song starts like that – very peaceful."

Japan

"I thought I was going to write loads of music there, but I ended up just enjoying Tokyo. It turned into more of a crate-digging exercise than anything else. I bought loads of records, mainly jazz. The best thing I bought was a Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson live album called 'It's Your World', which has a version of 'The Bottle' with a 10-minute drum solo. I might not have written any songs there, but it was worth it for that alone!"



THE MINI INTERVIEW



The Church Of Yeezus

Kanye-inspired religion

You're the anonymous spokesman for The Church Of Yeezus. What's Yeezianity?

"It's a new religion I'm organising. It takes the tenets of Christianity, ideas from new-school thought, and rehashes them together with Kanye as the model of behaviour. I don't want to make my name public because the ideas and people's reactions should be the only thing people see."

And it's serious?

"Oh yes."

***Riiiiight*. And at what point exactly did you realise that Kanye was the messiah?**

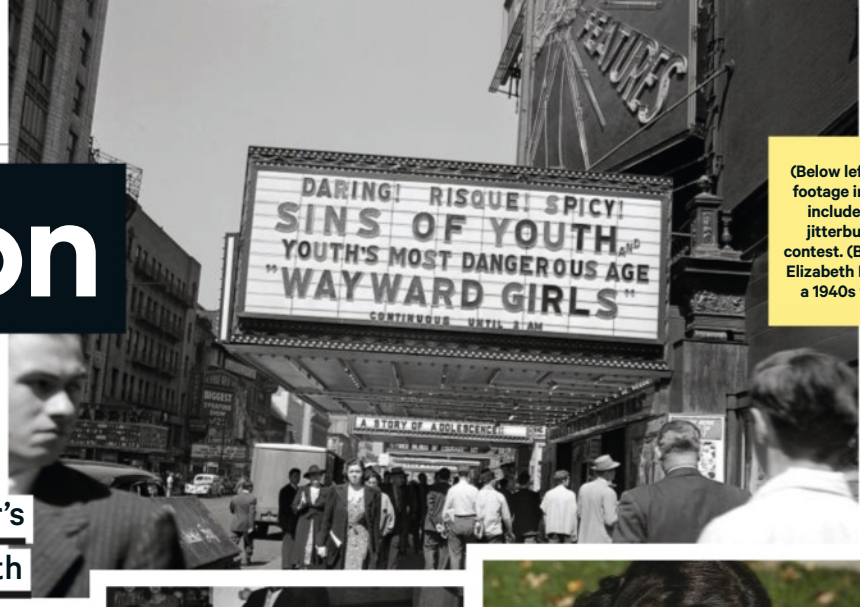
"I've been a fan since 'The College Dropout', but he put the idea out there, with his album 'Yeezus'. No-one believes in themselves like Kanye. People say he's self-obsessed, but he's a giving person who's passionate about bringing his vision to life. Just sometimes he gets a little rude."

How are you going to go about spreading the word of Yeezianity?

"I've put up a call for pictures of people holding up a sign saying 'I believe in Yeezus!' I thought there might be a hate parade, but there's been a really positive reaction. I hope people take it to their own creative level. Post something entertaining on YouTube. Spread the good word, you know?"

BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB AS TOLD TO ANDY WELCH YEEZUS INTERVIEW: LOUIS PATTISON

Teens on screen



(Below left) Archive footage in *Teenage* includes a 1939 jitterbug dance contest. (Below right) Elizabeth Raiss plays a 1940s teenager

A new film scored by Deerhunter's Bradford Cox documents the birth of the teenager – and the music and rebellion that followed

When British music critic-turned-historian Jon Savage had his punk chronicle *England's Dreaming* published in 1991, he couldn't have known that five or so years later it would fall into the hands of two American teenagers – or that he'd end up collaborating with them on his first feature film. Matt Wolf, then a budding filmmaker from Santa Fe, New Mexico, loved Savage's vivid picture of history; meanwhile, the book spurred on young Bradford Cox's obsession with punk, which would eventually result in him becoming the frontman for Deerhunter and Atlas Sound.

Savage made a further contribution to the annals of pop culture history with 2007's *Teenage: The Creation Of Youth 1875–1945*, an astonishing account of the emergence of the 'teenager' as a specific demographic, and the youth cultures, alienation and rebellion adolescents have experienced since the late 19th century. The book is now a film, *Teenage*, directed by Wolf, scored by Cox and with actor and musician Jason Schwartzman as executive producer. It's an effective collision of archive footage and narration from the perspective of four young people who grew up in Britain, Germany and America during the first half of the 20th century.

In the late '90s, Wolf and Cox had encountered each other as teenagers on a nascent online arts forum. "I remember Bradford did a graphic journal about music and visual culture, *The Sound Of Print*," Wolf recalls. "I was a big fan." They didn't hear of each other again until 2008, when Wolf released his first film, *Wild Combination: A Portrait Of Arthur Russell*, dedicated to the late disco composer and musical experimentalist. Cox emailed Wolf about his love of the film, and they reconnected.

Also a fan of the Russell documentary, Savage was thrilled when Wolf agreed to direct *Teenage*. They decided to tell the story of the teenager as a kind of "living collage", using Deerhunter and Atlas Sound songs as a temporary soundbed that would be replaced by Cox's original score. "I knew that music would play a really important part in the film because almost all the archival footage is silent," says Wolf. "Combining that with contemporary music felt transformative, a way to make the material resonate now."

When Cox was 16, he spent the summer in hospital as a result of his Marfan Syndrome, and much of the music of Deerhunter and Atlas Sound reflects that lonely period with a blend of bitterness and romanticism. But Cox's *Teenage* score is mellower, its dusky mysticism evoking his heroes, Stereolab, whose singer Laetitia Sadier's lyrics politicised him as a teenager.

Teenage spans youth's liberation from child labour at the turn of the 20th century, gaining freedom, losing it again in war, and forming tribal identities around music and shared beliefs. Some of the most poignant images are of German teen movements, particularly the never-before-seen footage of the Hamburg Swing gang, a WWII-era group of German teenagers who refused to join the Hitler Youth. Led by Tommie Scheel, they celebrated *verboten* British fashion and American swing music.

"I thought that was really haunting," says Cox. "The idea of somebody saying, 'You can't listen to that music, it's degenerate' – I don't think people are forced to fight for things they believe in as much today. Today, kids are being sold the same thing they used to rebel against, better disguised and less likely to start a revolt. Youth energy is a really wild resource to be exploited, like oil or something. It's kinetic and indescribably powerful. People like Hitler – and marketers – look at it as an opportunity to pervert."

■ LAURA SNAPES

"YOUTH CULTURE IS KINETIC AND POWERFUL"
Bradford Cox

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Lesser-known youth movements highlighted in *Teenage*

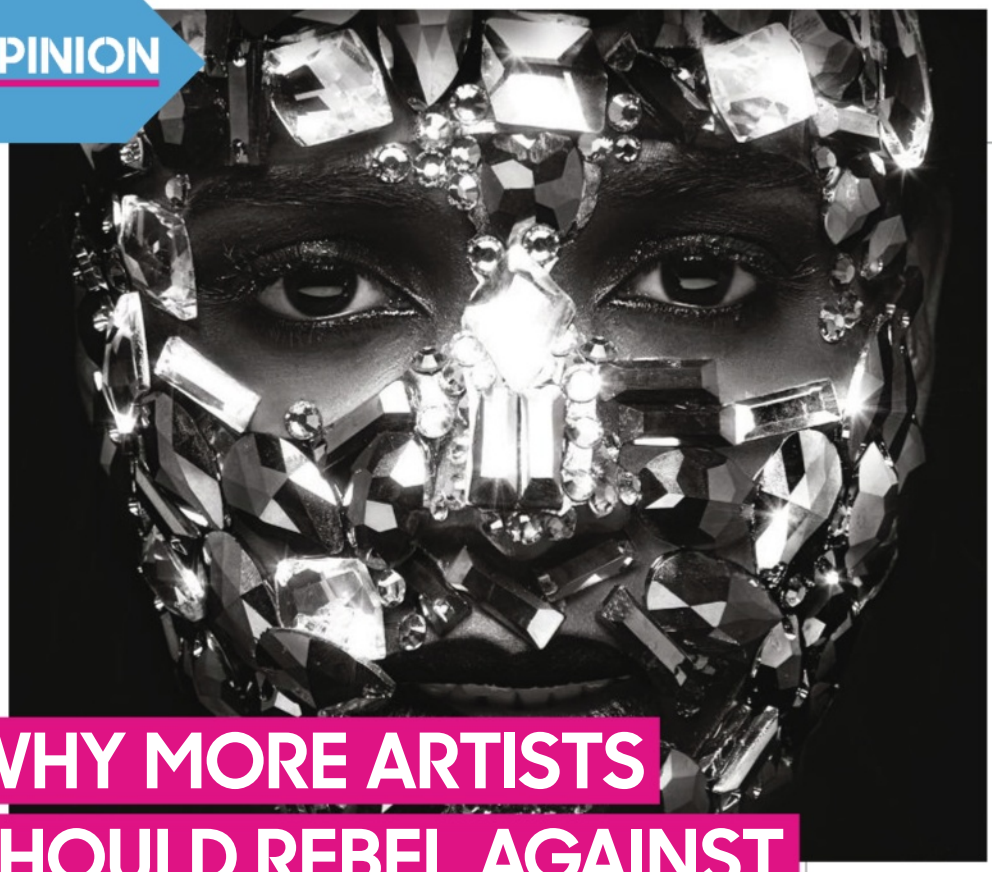
Bright Young Things
Proving that hand-wringing over teen tearaways is nothing new, this group of high-society 1920s British teenagers lived fast. Their figurehead, Brenda Dean Paul, was the "Lindsay Lohan of the age", says Wolf.

Wandervogel
Originally formed in 1896, this idealistic German youth movement (the name means "wandering birds") transformed itself after WWI. They abandoned "childish things" and aimed to reconnect with nature, with young people filling the leadership roles.

Teen Canteens
These 1940s alcohol-free social clubs were self-governed by teens after adults realised more freedom might encourage them to be more responsible.

▶ ***Teenage*** **opens in UK cinemas on January 31**

JENN FIVE, ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS LTD/MARY EVANS



WHY MORE ARTISTS SHOULD REBEL AGAINST THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

BY **ANGEL HAZE**

Last month, rapper Angel Haze posted her then-unreleased debut 'Dirty Gold' online as a "fuck you" to Island Records. Here, she explains why

On December 18, I leaked my own debut album. I did it because I was frustrated. I finished my album in three months – most people take years – and no matter how great everyone kept saying it was, the release date kept getting pushed back – most recently to March 2014. I felt completely brushed off.

I wasn't trying to make an artistic statement where I was telling people "you control your own destiny"; I leaked the album for personal reasons. It was more about saying "don't fuck me about, dude" because, at the end of the day, I'll always choose my artistry.

The pace of the industry has been the hardest thing to become accustomed to since becoming a recording artist. I used to put out everything at my own leisure and I dictated how fast it occurred. I've already started writing my second album, and I get frustrated because I can't put out a demo without getting it cleared, or without someone stealing it or suing me for it. It's difficult to adjust to that. Everything is completely stifled, but if you learn to manipulate it then it could mean something positive for you.

My label eventually released 'Dirty Gold' between Christmas and New Year, which I thought was hilarious. It's a difficult time to release an album, but I don't see it as them trying to bury it – it's what I wanted all along. I don't regret what I did at all. Patience is not my strong suit – I don't do waiting. Obviously I had to understand the consequences, like the possibility of being dropped from my label, but I was like, "Fuck it, who cares, let's do it."

Financially, it's a move that could either go really well or really badly, but you make more money from live shows and I could do a billion of them. Either way, the leak has had a positive outcome: I'm going to continue working with my label. They were cool in the end. I ended up in a 10-hour meeting with ranting people and an angry me and we just ended up calling it a truce. I got a rap on the knuckles; nothing happened.

I think it will be hard to outlive the rebel tag I've gained over the short time I've been an artist. Everyone thinks I'm this rambunctious fireball that does whatever she wants, and I'm not. I put a lot of thought into what I do, even if people think I'm being an asshole. But I do think that more people should rebel against the music industry – if the machine doesn't work for you, you break it and you fix it and you make it work for you instead. There are no other options, aside from getting fucked – and I don't think many people want that. ■

▶For more opinion and debate, head to NME.COM/blogs

LOST ALBUMS #13

Dawes
Stories Don't End (2013)

Chosen by Ronnie Vannucci, The Killers

"They're from LA, this is their latest record and they're picking up traction, but I don't think enough people know about them in the UK. It feels like the next generation of Jackson Browne, the Eagles, that sort of songwriterly Californian rock. Good songs, thoughtful, well written, not too 'wet blanket' but still heartfelt. They know how to play. I first heard them via their song 'Time Spent In Los Angeles', which came on the radio and sounded great. Then Brandon [Flowers] was like, 'You've got to check out this band' – turned out it was the same band."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** August 19, 2013
▶**LABEL** Virgin EMI
▶**BEST TRACKS** Most People, Something In Common, Just Beneath The Surface
▶**WHERE TO FIND IT** Readily available online and in stores
▶**LISTEN ONLINE** On Spotify

AS TOLD TO KATE HUTCHINSON. PHOTOS: CAITLIN MOGRIDGE, ED MILES

Sam Toms and James Bagshaw (right) in the latter's studio in his mum's house, Kettering

Temples

It may have been recorded in a spare room in Kettering, but expectations are sky-high for the psych-rock quartet's debut album

In April of last year, Noel Gallagher declared that "the future of the galaxy" depended on whether Kettering quartet Temples' debut album was any good or not. With the progress of the entire Milky Way resting on slight shoulders, you'd be forgiven for expecting the group – chief songwriters James Bagshaw (vocals/guitar) and Tom Warmsley (bass), plus keyboardist Adam Smith and drummer Sam Toms – to hunker down for months on end with a host of production wizards in a high-end studio HQ. Instead, 'Sun Structures' was recorded in snatches of time amounting to little more than three weeks in Bagshaw's mum's spare room in Kettering – a tiny space that fits "one person standing up and one person sitting down".

"I don't think you need months at a time," shrugs Bagshaw. "When we work on a song, it stays on the canvas until we've created the atmosphere around it and it's an unspoken thing where we know when it's finished. The feelings evoked are the most important thing and the production is instrumental in capturing that, so it made sense to do it ourselves."

Ditching boring conventions such as 'grammar' and 'making sense', Temples also adopted a DIY approach to language to concoct their own, mystical vernacular for 'Sun Structures'. "We use words as sounds in a way which almost creates your own language," the singer says. "If an English teacher read the lyrics, there'd be mistakes everywhere and probably some words that might not even be words. But it's more important that the word sounds right in order to serve the melody, which I guess is quite similar to what Tyrannosaurus Rex used to do. The meaning might be a little skewed, but it's music – it's not a book of poems."

Sonically, the album veers from the glam stomps of the aforementioned Marc Bolan ('Keep In The Dark') through the percussive, '60s-influenced 'Test Of Time', the familiar psychedelic strut of debut single 'Shelter Song' and the pared-down, baroque closer 'Fragment's Light'. It's the expansive centrepiece 'Move With The Season', however, that pushed the group the furthest. "I think that song will surprise people; more than any of the others, it doesn't follow such a regular structure and goes on a journey," Bagshaw says. "I wanted it to be a bit like 'Venus In Furs' – that same kind of tempo. It's nowhere near as good as that, but I was aiming for that area in the outro."

Having spent much of last year on the road, Temples now say the relentless touring has helped train the fledgling group to "realise the fuller picture of some songs" and "plug a few more sonic holes". But the main asset the quartet's manic year has brought to their debut? "We learnt how to sing," Bagshaw nods, perfectly straight-faced. "None of us had ever really done that properly before." Vocals sorted, we're sure the galaxy should be safe for now... ■ LISA WRIGHT

"WE LEARNT HOW TO SING. NONE OF US HAD, REALLY"
James Bagshaw

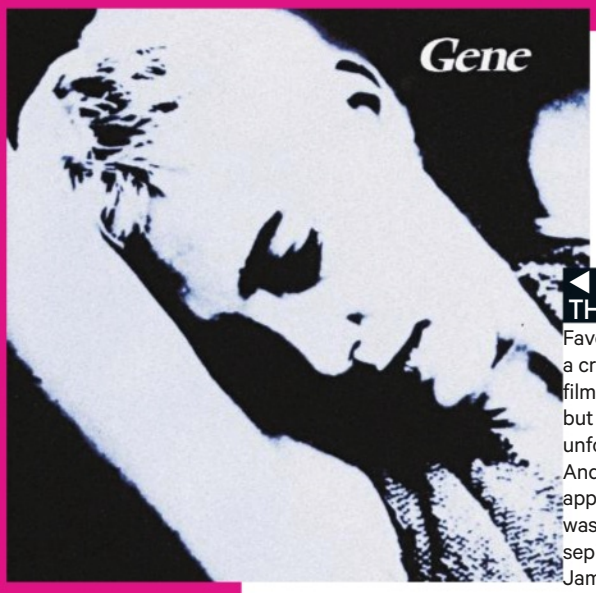
ED MILES

▶THE DETAILS

▶**TITLE** Sun Structures
▶**RELEASE DATE** February 10, 2014
▶**LABEL** Heavenly
▶**PRODUCER** Temples
▶**RECORDED** James Bagshaw's home studio, Kettering
▶**TRACKS** Shelter Song, Sun Structures, The Golden Throne, Keep In The Dark, Mesmerise, Move With The Season, Colours To Life, A Question Isn't Answered, The Guesser, Test Of Time, Sand Dance, Fragment's Light
▶**JAMES BAGSHAW SAYS** "The record represents what we've been experiencing as people over the year. Hopefully there's an urgency about the tracks – we may have been rushing ourselves, but that's because the real personality is there."

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM

"IT WILL ALWAYS SOUND FRESH"
Matt James



THIS WEEK...

Gene: Olympian

Reissued this week as a double album, the Smiths acolytes' debut was a thoughtful precursor to Britpop

THE BACKGROUND
Emerging from the ashes of the woefully named Sp!n into the nascent Britpop scene, Gene were championed by two music journalists, Keith Cameron and Roy Wilkinson, who established the Costermonger label to release their music. Two singles – 'For The Dead' and 'Be My Light, Be My Guide' – followed, and the combination of Steve Mason's rich guitar playing and Martin Rossiter's distinctive vibrato delivery meant comparisons to The Smiths were unshakeable. Alongside Rossiter and Mason were bassist Kevin Miles and Matt James on drums, all pulling in different musical directions and creating the sonic frisson that runs through this record. As Blur and Oasis readied for Britpop's pantomime, 'Olympian' offered thoughtful respite.

◀ STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE
Favouring an image of a crucifixion from Swedish film *The Seventh Seal* but finding permission unforthcoming, designer Andy Vella crafted a close approximation, from which was cropped the distinctive sepia image. Drummer Matt James has since wondered if they should have swapped it for the Leni Riefenstahl photo used for the 'Olympian' single.

FIVE FACTS
1 The band failed to include either of those killer early singles, believing fans shouldn't have heard half the record before they bought it.

2 Several key tracks on the album were written and demoed in a small cottage in Devon, after the band were sent there by their label with a portable eight-track desk to write more material.

3 The vast majority of the record was recorded in the now defunct Townhouse 3 studio in Battersea, located right in the middle of a council estate and formerly owned by The Who.

4 The band wanted the majestic 'London, Can You Wait?' to be a single but traded it for 'Haunted By You' in order to get their label Polydor's consent to release the title track next.

5 Singer Martin Rossiter was recruited by Steve Mason in a club. Although he demurred in contemporary interviews, he's since said the reason for his selection had little to do with Rossiter's musical prowess; he simply looked right.

LYRIC ANALYSIS
"It's illegal that my clan just aren't seen as people/On the Isle Of Man" – 'Left-Handed'
The title of this song functioned as a metaphor for being gay, which stood out more than it should in the blokey atmosphere of Britpop.

"I was having the time of my life/So why did you have to die?" – 'London, Can You Wait?'
Titled after the dying words of a close friend, this utterly heart-wrenching song expresses guilt at not noticing that the individual was in trouble ("*The alarm rang loud, the lights were on*").

"Still trouble comes from the pubs and the clubs/Why don't they understand? But I've got a plan" – 'Sleep Well Tonight'
Despairing at being constantly labelled 'fey' and 'winsome' by the press, Rossiter was at pains to prove to the world that you can be pugnacious as well as eloquent.

WHAT WE SAID THEN
"'Olympian' is actually a rather fine Smiths LP. Not as good as 'The Queen Is Dead' but then, what is?" 5/10, Steve Sutherland, NME, March 15, 1995

WHAT WE SAY NOW
Rising above those early notions of being Smiths copyists, 'Olympian' is one of Britpop's few enduring triumphs, built on the chiming guitar of Mason and Rossiter's bristling but emotive vocals.

FAMOUS FAN
Actor and fellow musician Paddy Considine described 'Olympian' as "beautiful, beautiful work [which] will stand up forever".

IN THEIR OWN WORDS
"I think we really captured the essence of who Gene were at that time. If you play it in 10 or 20 years' time it will still sound fresh. I'm very proud of 'Olympian' and I always will be."
Matt James, 2013

THE AFTERMATH
As Martin Rossiter battled severe depression, the band followed up 'Olympian' with the grandiose 'Drawn To The Deep End', with staggering amounts of money spent in the studio. A subsequent Royal Albert Hall performance was a watershed moment, but Polydor lost interest as sales dwindled and third album 'Revelations' crept out in 1999. Their final album, 'Libertine', came out in 2001 but was largely ignored. Gene split in 2004. Rossiter went on to release a solo album in 2012.

▶THE DETAILS
▶**RECORDED** Autumn 1994 ▶**RELEASE DATE** March 20, 1995 ▶**LENGTH** 40:31 ▶**PRODUCER** Phil Vinall ▶**STUDIO** Townhouse 3, London ▶**HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION** 8 ▶**UK SALES** 96,000 ▶**WORLDWIDE SALES** 250,000 (estimated) ▶**SINGLES** Sleep Well Tonight; Haunted By You; Olympian ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Haunted By You ▶2. Your Love, It Lies ▶3. Truth, Rest Your Head ▶4. A Car That Sped ▶5. Left-Handed ▶6. London, Can You Wait? ▶7. To The City ▶8. Still Can't Find The Phone ▶9. Sleep Well Tonight ▶10. Olympian ▶11. We'll Find Our Own Way

WORDS: GARETH JAMES PHOTO: ANDY WILLSHER

NEWS DESK

THE NUMBERS

21
Date in January when Trent Reznor's music streaming service Beats Music launches

16
Years Christine McVie was absent from Fleetwood Mac before rejoining the group

28
Years HMV's second flagship store on Oxford Street was open before closing last week

40
Number of festivals OutKast will play around the world this summer, starting at Coachella

BIG MOUTH

"We need to stop buying into the myth about gender equality. It isn't a reality yet. Unless women and men both say this is unacceptable, things will not change"

BEYONCÉ writes an essay in response to a report that 42 million women in the USA are either living, or are on the brink of living, in poverty

THE BIG QUESTION

CAN ALT-J CONTINUE WITHOUT BASSIST GWIL SAINSBURY?

Tom Fleming
Wild Beasts
"Yes, they can continue. But good on Gwil for making that decision, it can't have been easy."

Jeremy Allen
NME writer
"The bass player is the easiest member to replace, unless it's Paul McCartney. The real driving force behind Alt-J's sound is drummer Thom Green. They'll carry on as normal without Gwil, but they will miss his stage presence."

Daniella Meredith
NME reader
"They can easily continue. It may be hard initially but bands lose members all the time and carry on. They can either replace him or embrace it and continue as a three-piece."

WHO THE FUCK IS...

The Travis Waltons

The Bristol band that managed to get *Breaking Bad* actor Aaron Paul and Frank Turner to cameo in the video for their track 'Homewrecker'.

How the hell did they manage that?

The Travis Waltons' frontman Daniel Flay donated money to a charity run by Aaron Paul's wife in exchange for a personalised message from the actor. Then he asked Paul to introduce the video.

Have they got plans to work with Aaron Paul again?

The band tell *NME* they'd "love to" but that they "guess he's so super busy".

GOOD WEEK ↔ BAD WEEK

Lykke Li

As well as pop music, Scandinavians also make great crime drama. Lykke Li is attempting to do both after being cast in tense new movie *Tommy*, to be released in March.

The Simpsons

The Simpsons apologised to Judas Priest for calling them 'death metal' in a recent episode. In the following week's opening credits Bart wrote, "Judas Priest Is Not 'Death Metal'" on the board.

AND FINALLY

Not quite coffee (and TV)
Alex James has branched out of the world of cheese by trademarking a new drink with the name 'Britpop'. Expect it to be fizzy to begin with before going flat at the end.

Canada, oh Canada
Drake helped to convince Jermain Defoe to sign for Toronto FC. The rapper is an ambassador for the team and that was enough to convince the striker to leave Spurs. That and £90k per week.

Will.i.sell
Will.i.am has revealed his vision for the future of music merchandise: the 3D printer. He hopes to develop technology so fans can buy figurines depicting moments from a gig after it ends.

▶Find these stories and more on NME.COM

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS JANUARY 19, 2014

01 ▲ **Bruce Springsteen**
High Hopes COLUMBIA

'High Hopes' takes the top spot and proves that Bruce is still The Boss. His 18th studio album is a collection of unreleased tracks including collaborations with Tom Morello and a cover of Suicide's 'Dream Baby Dream'.

NEW	2	Wishful Thinking **Neck Deep** HOPELESS
NEW	3	Dark Days **Canterbury** HASSLE
▲	4	Total Strife Forever **East India Youth** STOLEN
NEW	5	Post Tropical **James Vincent McMorrow** BELIEVE
▼	6	AM **Arctic Monkeys** DOMINO
▼	7	If You Wait **London Grammar** METAL & DUST
NEW	8	Give The People What They Want **Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings** DAPTONE
NEW	9	Has God Seen My Shadow? An Anthology 1989-2011 **Mark Lanegan** LIGHT IN THE ATTIC
▼	10	Pale Green Ghosts **John Grant** BELLA UNION
▼	11	Wig Out At Jagbags **Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks** DOMINO
▼	12	Days Are Gone **Haim** POLYDOR
▲	13	Settle **Disclosure** PMR
▼	14	Halcyon **Ellie Goulding** POLYDOR
NEW	15	Good Luck **Decade** SPINEFARM
▼	16	Live From KCRW **Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
▲	17	Silence Yourself **Savages** MATADOR
▲	18	Immunity **Jon Hopkins** DOMINO
▼	19	World Psychedelic Classics 5 **William Onyeabor** LUAKA BOP
▼	20	The Next Day **David Bowie** RCA
▼	21	Shangri La **Jake Bugg** EMI
■	22	Big Inner **Matthew E White** DOMINO
NEW	23	Love's Crushing Diamond **Mutual Benefit** OTHER MUSIC
NEW	24	Kid Face **Samantha Crain** FULL TIME HOBBY
NEW	25	Pushin' Against A Stone **Valerie June** SUNDAY BEST
▼	26	Push The Sky Away **Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds** BAD SEED
▼	27	Trouble Will Find Me **The National** 4AD
NEW	28	Run The Jewels **Run The Jewels** BIG DADA
▼	29	Beyoncé **Beyoncé** COLUMBIA
▼	30	Born To Die **Lana Del Rey** POLYDOR
▼	31	Tribute **John Newman** ISLAND
▼	32	Babel **Mumford & Sons** GENTLEMEN OF THE ROAD/ISLAND
■	33	Random Access Memories **Daft Punk** COLUMBIA
▼	34	Join The Dots **Toy** HEAVENLY
▼	35	The 1975 **The 1975** DIRTY HIT/POLYDOR
NEW	36	Reflektor **Arcade Fire** SONOVOX
NEW	37	Sing To The Moon **Laura Mvula** RCA
▼	38	II **Moderat** MONKEYTOWN
▼	39	Jake Bugg **Jake Bugg** MERCURY
▼	40	...Like Clockwork **Queens Of The Stone Age** MATADOR

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops, from Sunday to Saturday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS

THIS WEEK
INTENSE RECORDS
CHELMSFORD

FOUNDED 1999
WHY IT'S GREAT They're experts in drum'n'bass and dubstep, and put that knowledge into running their own club.
TOP SELLER THIS WEEK
Synkro – 'Lost Here' EP
THEY SAY "We're Essex's only remaining dance music shop, run by music lovers for music lovers."

NEWSDESK COMPILED BY DAVID RENSHAW PHOTOS: REX, DEAN CHALKLEY, RICHARD JOHNSON, ROBIN HARPER

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE

Sex Pistols

Kate Bush

Brett Anderson

Suede frontman

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING
'Hungarian Rhapsody' – Franz Liszt

"My father was an obsessive devotee – fan is too small a word. He would make yearly pilgrimages in his Morris Traveller to Liszt's birthplace in eastern Europe and bring back soil to wear in a phial around his neck."

THE FIRST ALBUM I EVER BOUGHT
'Never Mind The Bollocks, Here's The Sex Pistols' – Sex Pistols

"I saved up money from my paper round to buy it. It's a perfect blend of brutality and intelligence, which still makes it one of the greatest records ever made. The Sex Pistols were a huge influence on Suede, like they were on so many bands."

THE FIRST SONG I FELL IN LOVE WITH
'Wuthering Heights' – Kate Bush

"My sister bought the single from Woolworths in Haywards Heath in 1978 and we listened to it over and over in her bedroom in our council house. There is something truly magical about the song that still compels me today. The vocal sounded like a beautifully demented witch and the narrative fascinated me despite being too young to know of the literary provenance. This was the starting point of a life-long love of her work."

"KATE BUSH SOUNDED LIKE A BEAUTIFULLY DEMENTED WITCH"

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND
'The Boy With The Thorn In His Side' – The Smiths

"When times were tough for Suede in the early days, this would give me hope. I was a teenager when The Smiths were at their creative peak, so the themes of shyness and torpor and failure resonated with me. I still recognise the music as wonderful but a silly press scuffle with Morrissey in the '90s soured it for me, unfortunately."

THE SONG I CAN NO LONGER LISTEN TO
'The 2 Of Us' – Suede

"Although I'm very proud of it, 'Dog Man Star' is a hard album for me to listen to without being reminded of the bleak period in our career that spawned it. My relationship with Bernard [Butler, ex-Suede guitarist] was disintegrating and it culminated in him leaving the band. I'll always remember watching Bernard play this song's beautiful piano part from the control room and feeling this strange mixture of pride and trepidation."

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE
'Pull Up To The Bumper' – Grace Jones

"If you were a fly on the wall at our house you might see me and my 18-month-old boy dancing to it together in the kitchen. I don't know about dance music, but I do know that this makes me want to move my body."

THE SONG I DO AT KARAOKE
'Strangers In The Night' – Frank Sinatra

"The crooners are always the easiest to pull off, so I'd choose 'Strangers In The Night' or 'The Windmills Of Your Mind'. When me and Bernard were in The Tears touring Japan, we had a hilarious drunken karaoke session. We invited Ian Brown as he was playing with us at a festival one night, but he couldn't make it, which was a shame."

THE SONG I CAN'T GET OUT OF MY HEAD
'Two Fingers' – Jake Bugg

"My nine-year-old stepson is always playing Jake Bugg. The song found its way into my head and I realised that it was possibly a work of real pop magic. It reminds me of The Everly Brothers. There's a real talent there."

THE SONG I WISH I'D WRITTEN
'Vincent' – Don McLean

"The melody is beautiful and the lyrics are just so perfect: "*The silver thorn of bloody rose/Lie crushed and broken on the virgin snow*". It gives me a shiver just thinking about it. It's so sad and beautiful and manages to find that bittersweet holy grail the songwriter is always looking for."

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL
'1/1' (from 'Music For Airports') – Brian Eno

"Having spent much of my life listening to that piece of music, it'd be fitting for it to usher me towards the eternity of non-existence. I used to be able to be flippant about my death, but now, after having children, it terrifies me. The thought of leaving them behind, unable to help them through life, keeps me awake through the small hours."

Grace Jones

ANDY WILLSHER, IDOLS, RETNA, LFI

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NME NEW BAND OF THE WEEK

Angel Olsen

American singer-songwriter adds some glam to the gloom

St Louis-born songwriter Angel Olsen has a terrible habit of threatening never to release anything ever again. "I'm lucky that I finished the album when I did, but maybe it'll take four or five years to do it again; maybe I won't do anything else!" she says over the phone from her family home in North Carolina.

The record in question is 'Burn Your Fire For No Witness', her first since signing to Jagjaguwar. The sublime title may sound biblical, but for Olsen it means never feeling like she's only writing because people want her to. "I don't think that should be the drive," she says.

Instead, her lyrics – across all three of the records she's released to date (2012's 'Half Way Home' followed 2011 mini-album 'Strange Cacti') – centre on being totally at peace with solitude and trusting the courage of your own convictions. This, coupled with the spare, acoustic sound of her previous records, means she's often mistakenly pegged as a perennially sorrowful musician. "I've always thought about myself as addressing loneliness in a happy way, not necessarily a negative way," she explains. "The better you know yourself, the better you can communicate yourself to someone else."

ON NME.COM/NEWMUSIC NOW
▶Hear a Spotify playlist of Angel's favourite singers

While Olsen's previous records were never exactly delicate – her almighty tornado of a voice nixed that – they were often quiet and contemplative to the point of being unsettling. 'Burn Your Fire...' is different, and surprisingly rugged, with many of its songs bearing a glam strut inspired by Bowie, Lou Reed, Neil Young and old garage pop. She hadn't intended to write a rockier record, she says, but it developed naturally from touring 'Half Way Home' with a band, and realising "how much more fun it is to play when there are people around to enjoy it". The heavier songs were written last winter, though for Olsen the real work comes from "living your life and being exposed to different angles of the world. Taking time to reflect and research whatever it is that'll inspire the next record. That's just as important as releasing an album." ■ LAURA SNAPES

▶THE DETAILS

▶**BASED** Chicago
▶**FOR FANS OF** Waxahatchee, T Rex
▶**SOCIAL** @angelolsen
▶**BUY IT NOW** 'Burn Your Fire For No Witness' is out on February 18
▶**SEE HER LIVE** Manchester Soup Kitchen (March 23), London Dingwalls (25)
▶**BELIEVE IT OR NOT** In December 2013, Angel co-released another full-length album, singing the songs of Chicago poet Marvin Tate with Tim Kinsella, formerly of proto-emo band Cap'n Jazz

Turn the page for more great new music →

MORE NEW MUSIC

Cheerleader

Gorgeous Children

Loved by Hudson Mohawke and working alongside Jacques Greene, US duo Gorgeous Children sit firmly between the hip-hop and electronic worlds. As much about production as they are about rhymes, Gila Monsta and Face Vega's free mixtape 'ICE' is packed full of bone-cracking beats alongside *Blade Runner* samples ('Sour') and Vega's pitch-black flow. A murky new sound from hip-hop's underground.

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/vase-1/sets/ice

Ajimal

Those five years of studying medicine must seem an eternity, but thankfully Ajimal is putting his spare time to good use by writing idiosyncratic, heart-wrenching songs. 'This Human Joy', his most recent tune, is a truly special introduction with all the tense melodrama and harp-predilection of Active Child as he solemnly intones: "*This is for all those that do not sing, but die, with all their music still within them*".

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/ajimalmusic

▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/ajimal

▶SEE HIM London Roundhouse (February 21)

Mononoke

Fresh out of the blocks with her debut track, Liverpool's Mononoke embraces an endearing *Alice In Wonderland* lyrical theme on the super-sparse 'Alice'. Punctuated by little more than piano chimes, finger-click percussion and a thoroughly absorbing vocal, this mid-tempo, less-is-more gem of a debut is reason enough to get very excited about her.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/mononokeofficial

▶HEAR HER soundcloud.com/mononokeofficial

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Cheerleader

The Philadelphia outfit have recently re-emerged after months locked away refining tracks for their debut. Now a four-piece, their video for 'New Daze' – directed by Vondelpark collaborator Ciaràn Wood – is suitably woozy in style, and the perfect accompaniment to the track's deft and sullen New Order-ish poppiness. Next up for them is a trip to SXSW in March.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/cheerleadersounds

▶HEAR THEM cheerleadersounds.com

Something

Something is Oliver Catt, the brain behind defunct alternative pop project Fantasy Rainbow, which imploded shortly after an excellent debut album released in late 2012. Something is considerably more reserved, curious and experimental. His debut full-length 'What', on ASDFG Records, mixes loud aggression with more delicate tunes in a challenging but beautiful and affecting manner.

▶HEAR THEM asdfgrecords.bandcamp.com

Vancouver Sleep

Brisbane resident Tim Bettinson – better known as Vancouver Sleep Clinic – may be EDM's answer to Bon Iver's seclusion ethic. 'Collapse' channels Justin Vernon's emotional complexity and sense of unease while trading ethereal guitar for deeply atmospheric electronics. The last 40 seconds of the track are especially stunning: a forlorn piano sees out the already established, incredibly intimate melody. Is Bettinson Australia's answer to East India Youth? He damn well could be.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/VancouverSleepClinic

▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/vancouversleepclinic

Le Vasco

Fake Laugh

There's something of The Lemonheads about this Brighton band's blend of irresistible hooks and frontman Kamran Khan's nonchalantly vulnerable vocals. Debut single 'Short Of Breath', released on Exeter-based label Art Is Hard, dances between cheerfulness and melancholy behind its tale of romance gone sour, while new track 'Tell Me Why' layers fuzzy production and joyously screeching guitars.

▶SOCIAL facebook.com/fakelaughmusic

▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/fakelaughmusic

▶SEE THEM LIVE London Old Blue Last (January 23)

Le Vasco

Beholden to hip-hop with a large slice of scything electronica, Paris' Le Vasco create a tempestuous racket live. They were the toast of Transmusicales – France's biggest musical showcase – last December, and there's a scramble for signatures, with Pop Noire (Savages' label) the favourites.

▶SOCIAL @_levasco

BAND CRUSH

Christopher Owens

Melted Toys

"Melted Toys are from San Francisco and they're really great. They use a drum machine and then they get swirling guitars and melody hooks going. It's a bit like The Cure meets Britpop. They've got a good vocalist with a great voice. Great songs too."

WORDS: DAVID RENSHAW, NEIL WOOD, MATT WILKINSON, JAKE MAY, TOM WALTERS, RACHEL AROESTI, JAMES BALMONT, PHIL GWYN, JEREMY ALLEN, PHIL GWYN, ANNA CONRAD PHOTO: JENN FIVE

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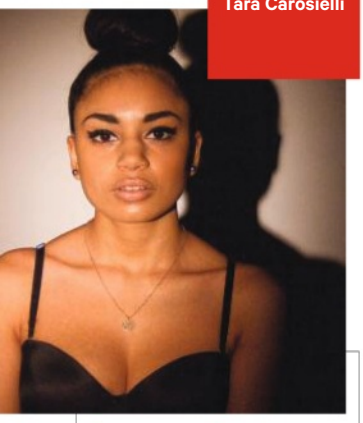

Tara Carosielli

Chumped

With Chumped, it's all in the name. Self-proclaimed drinkers who write songs about feelings, this Brooklyn four-piece churn out outrageously infectious pop-punk that's slathered in residue from Paramore's early days. On the other hand, they also pack the youthful punch that makes bands like Swearin' and Potty Mouth so exciting. 'Someday' is full of reckless abandon; a tune that'll be initiating fist-pumps and foot-stomping in bedrooms for the foreseeable future.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/chumped

▶**HEAR THEM** chumped.bandcamp.com/

Dressmaker

Dressmaker sound like the kind of band who listen to Bauhaus and wear nothing but black. Their raging, seven-minute 'Skeleton Girl' is etched against a background of fuzz that scratches so deep it would make The Jesus And Mary Chain whimper.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/dressmakerlondon

▶**HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/dressmaker

▶**SEE THEM LIVE** London Rhythm Factory (February 12), London Lexington (23)

Tara Carosielli

As smouldering bass gives way to Tara Carosielli's saccharine vocal after 10 seconds of 'The Opposite Game', one thought springs to mind: PMR. The London-based label was responsible for bringing us Jessie Ware and Sam Smith – but while 'The Opposite Game' eschews those artists' tendencies to veer towards the dancefloor, it remains utterly sultry and introspective throughout its four hypnotic minutes.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/TaraCarosielli

▶**HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/tara-carosielli

Shy Mirrors

It's hard to imagine Shy Mirrors being a bashful bunch. Released back in June on Mirror Universe Tapes, their cassette 'Wrong Bomb' drips snottily with crust-punk influences and contagious hooks. It all sounds like your favourite Lifetime songs being blasted through a half-broken radio, plus there's a bit of Jawbreaker and anarcho-punk thrown in.

▶**SOCIAL** facebook.com/shymirrors

▶**HEAR THEM** shymirrors.bandcamp.com

More new music on page 24 ⟶

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Father/Daughter

▶**FOUNDED** In 2010 by Jessi Frick and her dad, Ken Hector

▶**BASED** San Francisco and Miami

▶**KEY RELEASES** **Mutual Benefit/Holy Spirits** – Mutual Spirits 12-inch (2011), **Leapling** – Losing Face (2012), **Flagland** – Love Hard (2013)

▶**RADAR SAYS** Although Jessi handles most of the label's day-to-day operations, she says Father/Daughter is a truly family affair, with everyone chipping in to make sure things run smoothly. Last year was FD's busiest yet – seven releases, including four full-length albums.

Radar
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MONSTER

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

COURTNEY BARNETT

WIZARDS FROM OZ

The Spinning Rooms are the band I've been looking for my entire life. It turns out they're mates of mates so we played a Hawaiian house party with them in between downpours recently. They have a nightmarish drone to their sound made even more enchanting by a wailing saxophone. See their albums 'The Spinning Rooms' and 'Complicating Things' for proof.

I've spent many a summer night sitting in the Tote beer garden and overhearing this conversation: "Was that rain (*holds palms open in air*)?" "Nah, it's bat piss. There's heaps of bats around here." "How do you know if it's shit or piss?" "Bats don't shit, they only piss." **Batpiss** have this one song about a kid who grows up in a rough family and joins the army so he can shoot people to vent his frustration and anger. Shit gets pretty dark, but at the same time you want to jump around and make your shirt all wet with beer and sweat. Seek out 'Batpiss' (on cassette) and 'Nuclear Winter'.

Atolls

Harmony (pictured above) are an adorable mongrel of a band. Tom (The Nation Blue) absolutely howls over the clangorous guitar-bass-drums combo, which is juxtaposed with a beautiful three-piece gospel-style choir. That which is powerfully loud is even more powerfully soft, and when I saw them live, Harmony had me so tightly wrapped around their dynamic little finger I nearly cried tears of revelation.

An atoll is a ring-shaped reef, island, or chain of islands formed of coral. **Atolls** are a three-piece: fuzzed-out, fast-paced, wall-of-pop melodies and dredging guitar tones (much like the tone of the defenceless, heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef in Queensland which is being turned into a dredged oil-drilling amusement park). They're my favourite band and they've released this one EP called 'Hair Machine', which I listen to at least once a day. Lucas, the singer, also plays in **King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard**.

"Batpiss make you want to make your shirt all wet with sweat and beer"

Finally, **Teeth & Tongue** are a much better band than me, so I was stoked when I convinced them to open for my EP launch in November. Listen to the snare in new track 'Good Man' – it sounds like James Bond shooting at Christopher Walken in the depths of the Silicon Valley underbelly. In fact, T&T should do the next 007 intro (in my humble opinion). Keep your eyes and ears open for 'Grids' which is due later this year.

Next week: DFA's Jonathan Galkin

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Ancient Mariner

Denver native Gabriel Jorgensen puts Thom Yorke's softly looping solo work under a the microscope on his debut EP, which examines loneliness and escapism through wistful vocals and sprightly guitar filigrees. Recorded at a remote cabin in the Rockies, the aptly titled 'In Solitude' is as bewitching as any of Justin Vernon's side projects.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/ancientmarinerco
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/ancient_mariner

Netherfriends

It's impossible to say what Shawn Rosenblatt is going to do next. Having already released his '50 Songs 50 States' collection and a Miles Davis-inspired EP, he's back with yet more new tunes. '3P' consists of (you guessed it) three tracks that are hazier than a coffee shop in Amsterdam. Dabbling in reggae and R&B sensibilities, '3P' is Netherfriends at his most slinky and seductive. This spring's anthems have come early.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/netherfriends
▶HEAR HIM netherfriends.bandcamp.com

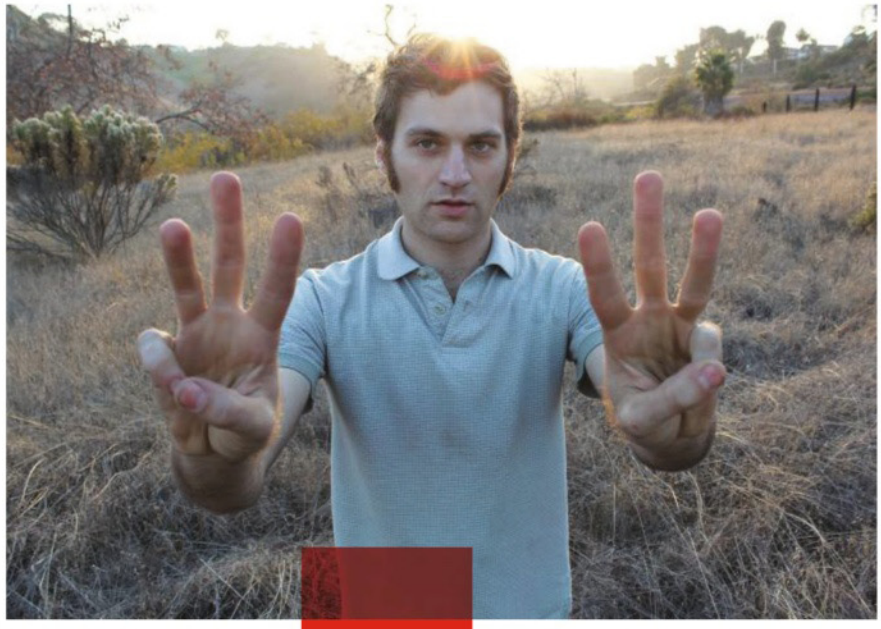
Ancient Mariner

Eugene Quell

Brighton lad Eugene bares his Nirvana crush from the outset on debut track 'Weird Purr'. The crackly "*fuck's sake*" remark at the start, the hypnotic acoustic chug and fuzz-flecked bass hook all nod to Kurt and co, but Tobias Hayes has grander plans for his latest alter ego than ripping off the past. Start by checking out his gift of a grungy four-track EP, out via hometown indie Sonic Anhedonic.
▶SOCIAL @eugene_quell
▶HEAR HIM soundcloud.com/eugene-quell

Bluebird

Sharing a label with previous *Radar* tips Plough Lines, Nottingham's Bluebird channel the same hybrid of post-rock and post-hardcore that Crash Of Rhinos and Prawn have perfected. Debut 'Giraffidae' is available now from Wolf Town DIY, and the title track is the highlight. Their technical prowess matches TTNG's and it's all backed up with an emotional curve that packs heavy weight.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/bluebirdband
▶HEAR THEM bluebirdnotts.bandcamp.com



NETHER-FRIENDS IS SLINKY, SEDUCTIVE AND HAZIER THAN AN AMSTER-DAM COFFEE SHOP

Lilliput

Having just released an EP on Frankie & The Heartstrings' Pop Sex Ltd label, Sunderland quintet Lilliput blend rich harmonies à la Fleet Foxes with feelgood, nostalgic pop. The resulting concoction of '50s doo-wop vocals and melodic guitar is quite something.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/lilliputband
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/lilliputband

JLYY

The brash but brilliant 'Glass Drum' appeared online in early January and is the perfect carrot-on-a-stick teaser from JLYY. With stylish nods to Wu Lyf and Money setting the bar high, we're hoping to see and hear more from the London-based trio very soon.
▶HEAR THEM bandofjlyy.tumblr.com

Tusindfald

Jesper Lundager's Danish six-piece are admirably qualified to create the kind of immersive sensory overload that they do with Tusindfald. Their clinical live performances recall the intense volume of My Bloody Valentine, largely thanks to their roles as students of sound design at a place called the Sonic College in Denmark. Debut EP 'Kys' is a faultless callback to Slowdive and Ultra Vivid Scene.
▶SOCIAL facebook.com/tusindfald
▶HEAR THEM soundcloud.com/tusindfald

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

AMADELS PUSH EP ONLINE

After much hype, the New Yorkers have finally put their fine cassette EP 'Killing Myself Softly' online in full to stream. All eight tracks are winners – the midpoint between The Drums' pop sheen and the fuzz-racket of The Jesus And Mary Chain. Listen at amadels.bandcamp.com.

'...MONEY' FOR SHOPPING

Having had a busy close to 2013, DIY funk-punks Shopping continue their charge with live dates and the video release of 'For Your Money', a track from their excellent debut album 'Consumer Complaints'. On the strength of the three-piece's efforts, there's no gripes here.

Amadels

Black Gold Buffalo

PRIMITIVE PARTS STREAM 'OPEN HEADS'

London group Primitive Parts, featuring members of Male Bonding and Sauna Youth, have given NME.COM/newmusic the stream of new single 'Open Heads', which is released via Sexbeat on January 27. The launch party is at London's Mascara Bar on January 24.

BLACK GOLD BUFFALO RETURN

Last year's 'Magnets' marked Back Gold Buffalo as one of the UK's most eyewatering new acts. Then they went underground. They're still there, but another track has surfaced online, called 'A Million' and sounding just as enticing. No gigs are lined up yet, so make the most of it...

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Reviews

THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY TOM HOWARD

Broken Bells
After The Disco

Danger Mouse and James Mercer's second is a step up: better songs, bigger hooks, more memorable choruses

'Supergroup' is a word that's fallen out of vogue lately, having become synonymous with unions that seldom add up to the sum of their parts. Disappointment seems inherent in the concept itself, regardless of whether the music is any good – the wait for another The Good, The Bad & The Queen record, for example, feels as endless as The Dead Weather's next does inevitable. Yet while Broken Bells' individual elements – Brian Burton (aka Danger Mouse) and James Mercer (founder of The Shins) – certainly qualify as 'super', the undisputed It-producer of the last decade and His Royal alt.ness of post-millennial US indie have been unequivocal about the fact that this is not some casual side project, but their primary creative outlet. Broken Bells is a priority, not just a passion.

Certainly, it's easy to see what they each get out of the arrangement: for Burton, it's another opportunity to prove he's as adept at writing great pop music as he is at producing it, while for Mercer the partnership offers a respite from the buck-stops-here autonomy that comes with being The Shins' top banana. Despite that, however, the duo's self-titled 2010 debut didn't quite live up to its premise, sounding a little too much like The Shins with Danger Mouse behind the control desk. That's not nearly as much of an issue with this second album, although the habit does persist on a couple of tracks, notably the vanilla-flavoured indie-folk of 'Lazy Wonderland' and 'The Angel And The Fool', which attempts the age-old gambit of breathing life into an inconspicuous wisp of a song by artlessly plonking an electronic beat on top of it.

For the most part, though, 'After The Disco' unfolds at a fertile equidistance from each man's comfort zone (inasmuch as a polymath like Burton can be said to have

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

one) and the results are a marked improvement. The lead single, 'Holding On For Life', is just great: a sobering sketch of a young prostitute "*trying not to look so young and miserable*" on the streets of Paris, which takes flight on a Barry Gibb chorus that comes out of nowhere. The disco influence isn't as prevalent as the album's name might suggest – though the title track does evoke the feeling of walking home from the club on your own at 120 melancholic bpm – but there's a strong R&B current running through the likes of 'Leave It Alone' and 'The Remains Of Rock And Roll', whose kitschy Hollywood strings evoke a still-distant future as imagined from the vantage point of the past.

Ultimately, however, the album's success hinges on simple things: the songs are better, the hooks are bigger and the choruses are more memorable. Listening to the synths of 'Perfect World' (think Jan Hammer's *Miami Vice* soundtrack, 'Crockett's Theme', with its dinner-jacket sleeves hoisted higher for extra urgency), or the way the happily married Mercer becomes a willing vessel for Burton's lyrical musings on his more solitary life, it also feels as though they better understand each other's strengths – Burton as discerning pop aesthete, Mercer as melodic master craftsman – and know how to play to them without becoming beholden to them. If Broken Bells is to end up as their day job, then it's one they're improving at all the time.

8

■ BARRY NICOLSON

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** February 3 ▶**LABEL** Columbia ▶**PRODUCER** Danger Mouse ▶**LENGTH** 45:46 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Perfect World ▶2. After The Disco ▶3. Holding On For Life ▶4. Leave It Alone ▶5. The Changing Lights ▶6. Control ▶7. Lazy Wonderland ▶8. Medicine ▶9. No Matter What You're Told ▶10. The Angel And The Fool ▶11. The Remains Of Rock And Roll ▶**BEST TRACK** 'Perfect World'

JAMES MERCER: THE BEST OF

The Shins
Oh, Inverted World 2001

The Shins' debut is one of the most influential indie-rock albums of the last decade. Like a US Belle & Sebastian, once they've got you, they've got you for life.

The Shins
Chutes Too Narrow 2003

Natalie Portman's insistence in the 2004 film *Garden State* that The Shins would "change your life" exposed the band to a much wider audience. It followed this short but perfectly formed second album.

DANGER MOUSE: THE BEST OF

Danger Mouse
The Grey Album 2004

The LP that made his name took mash-up culture to its extreme, splicing The Beatles' 'White Album' and Jay Z's 'The Black Album'.

Gnarls Barkley
St Elsewhere 2006

'Crazy' became the first download-only single to top the UK charts, and the album that spawned it was just as impressive, sleekly combining pop and hip-hop.

MORE ALBUMS

Marijuana Deathsquads
Oh My Sexy Lord
Memphis Industries

Marijuana Deathsquads are Minneapolitan producer Ryan Olson's *other* supergroup, featuring many of the same faces – Har Mar Superstar and Bon Iver's Justin Vernon included – who appeared on Gayngs' excellent 2010 debut, 'Relayted'. Yet whereas that record adhered to a strict soft-rock dogma, 'Oh My Sexy Lord' ricochets from glitchy electronica to feral noise-rock via lysergic ambience, resulting in a jumble of ideas that somehow hangs together coherently. Whether listening to them or rashly attempting to describe them, there's little about the Deathsquads that's easy, but that doesn't make their third LP any less rewarding.

8

■ BARRY NICOLSON

The Gaslight Anthem
The B-Sides
SideOneDummy

Don't accuse The Gaslight Anthem of slacking between the release of their fourth and fifth albums. Not content with putting out a live DVD of their 2013 show at London's Troxy while bassist Alex Levine launches his vintage-barbershop-themed lifestyle brand, they're also offering up this lives-and-covers flipsides collection. Alongside a jangling juke joint version of The Rolling Stones' 'Tumbling Dice' there are acoustic takes on 'The '59 Sound', 'American Slang' and 'Great Expectations' that sound like they were recorded in a shonky old garage at the end of a big night on the bourbon. Brian Fallon's voice is as beaten and battered as the perfect leather jacket, and all the more beguiling for it.

7

■ LEONIE COOPER

Cymbals
The Age Of Fracture
A record full of fun and gravitas from the London band

Cymbals' 2011 debut, 'Unlearn', drew on post-punk, most notably Talking Heads. For the follow-up, the London four-piece say they want to get away from anything arch and serious and "make music that makes people want to dance and feel joy" – so they've traded the jerky shapes for gleaming digital perfection. 'Winter '98' is a fine example, a narcotic drift of multi-layered synthetic strings offset with the odd guitar twang and frontman Jack Cleverly sing-speaking in French. The end result is not dissimilar to Metronomy, both in sound and quality. 'Erosion' has shades of early-'80s New Order without being a slavish imitation, and the Italo-disco influenced 'The Natural World' features some acid-sharp commentary on modern life: "*I don't know enough about you/To be kind to you*". This record is fun with a capital 'F', but there are moments of gravitas too. Not easy to do, that.

8

■ CHRIS COTTINGHAM

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** January 27 ▶**LABEL** Tough Love ▶**PRODUCER** Dreamtrak ▶**LENGTH** 54:37 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Winter '98 ▶2. The Natural World ▶3. You Are ▶4. Empty Space ▶5. The 5% ▶6. The Fracture Of Age ▶7. Like An Animal ▶8. Erosion ▶9. This City ▶10. The End ▶11. Call Me ▶**BEST TRACK** The Natural World

Drowners
Drowners Frenchkiss

New York's Drowners take their name from a Suede single, but their debut LP suggests a band digging back further than the '90s Britpop revival, into the heart of the jangly '80s. Guitarist Jack Ridley clearly worships at the altar of Johnny Marr, while songs such as 'Unzip Your Harrington' wear their second-hand Englishness with pride. 'Ways To Phrase A Rejection' proves the four-piece can recreate the kitchen-sink narratives of the era, but they're at their best back in the 21st century: see 'Bar Chat', which fizzes along with pure garage-rock fury, frontman Matt Hitt adopting a Casablancas snarl and uncovering Drowners' real potential as he goes.

7

■ RHIAN DALY

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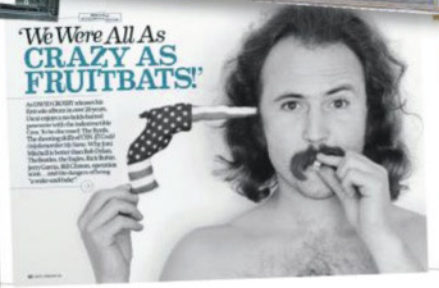


Reviews

Tara Jane O'Neil
Where Shine New Lights
Kranky

The hum of Tara Jane O'Neil's six-string is one of life's perennial comforts, and the words that pour from her honeyed throat feel as steady as the passing of time. O'Neil is a former member of fabled post-rock group Rodan, and her sixth album sounds intensely familiar, as if little time had passed since 2009's 'A Ways Away'. 'Where Shine New Lights' largely comprises cyclical compositions that plateau blissfully, but there are moments of traditional songcraft such as 'The Lull The Going', a gentle lullaby with a sweetly cooed vocal. Whether writing songs or constructing soundscapes, she's an expert in painting moods, and on closer 'New Lights For A Sky,' haunting cymbals shimmer under crisp guitar lines in a tender farewell.

7

HAYLEY AVRON

Supreme Cuts
Divine Ecstasy
Memphis Industries

While US production duo Supreme Cuts' debut effort 'Whispers In The Dark' explored an ambient wooziness, 'Divine Ecstasy' finds them shooting for proper songs with the help of guest vocalists. The chrome-plated cry of Poliça's Channy Leaneagh adds gravitas to the swirling rush of 'Envision', while 'Gone' is pure Chicago house revival. Elsewhere, though, the album dissipates into a gloopy miasma of recycled beats ('Dionysus Rising') and milquetoast vocals ('Down'). Only the appearance of Barbadian teen-rap prodigy Haleek Maul, annotating the grimy 'ISIS', saves Supreme Cuts from slipping completely between the cracks.

6

DAVID RENSHAW

Dum Dum Girls Too True

New York's Dee Dee Penny pays homage to her favourite gloomy bands and poets

As she tells it, Dum Dum Girls leader Dee Dee Penny locked herself away in her New York apartment in the summer of 2012 ready to draw a line under the two albums and four EPs that comprised her band's discography so far. She wanted to move on. She wanted to write the record that would grant her access to the rock'n'roll pantheon, where she could brush shoulders with a list of luminaries she helpfully spelled out: Suede, Siouxsie And The Banshees, "Cold-wave" Patti Smith, Madonna, The Cure, both "Velvet and Paisley Undergrounds" and The Stone Roses. You can't accuse her of lacking ambition.

'Too True' isn't the record to make her legend, but it is a fine homage to all those leather-clad heroes. It's an album that could have been written, recorded and released on any day since 1979, and if you heard it out of context you'd be forgiven for placing it closer to 1984 than 2014. That said, there's fun to be had in looking back.

As for making a break with her own band's past, Penny has dropped much of her inclination towards the Phil Spector girl-group sound in favour of gloomy, gothy chic and an unmistakable '80s sheen. The highpoint is the almost-title track 'Too True To Be Good', which shares its name and very little else with a late-era George Bernard Shaw play. It's a sweet pop hit with a heart of narcotic fuzz, like mainlining a sugarcoated speedball.

Penny is never afraid of wearing her influences too brazenly, and this goes for her lyrics as much as for her sonic tributes. 'Rimbaud Eyes' is a direct reference to decadent French poet Arthur Rimbaud, whom Penny cites as an influence along with his lover Paul Verlaine and the likes of Charles Baudelaire and Sylvia Plath.

By drinking deep from the coolest records and the hippest poets, Penny succeeds in beginning a new chapter for her band. The question of whether she makes it into the canon herself will have to wait for album number four.

7

KEVIN EG PERRY

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** January 28 ▶**LABEL** Sub Pop ▶**PRODUCERS** Richard Gottehrer, Sune Rose Wagner ▶**LENGTH** 30:36 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Cult Of Love ▶2. Evil Blooms ▶3. Rimbaud Eyes ▶4. Are You Okay? ▶5. Too True To Be Good ▶6. In The Wake Of You ▶7. Lost Boys And Girls Club ▶8. Little Minx ▶9. Under These Hands ▶10. Trouble Is My Name ▶**BEST TRACK** Too True To Be Good

Ásgeir
In The Silence
One Little Indian

Ásgeir Trausti is a star back in Iceland, where record-breaking sales mean one in 10 of his countryfolk own a copy of this spellbinding debut. It's easy to hear his plaintive songs, full of heartbreak, mountains and fjords, and picture Ásgeir recording in Bon Iver-style isolation. The truth is more sociable – his father contributes lyrics (translated here by John Grant), his brother plays bass and the music shimmers into colour with tumbling guitar, waves of brass and flowing electronic pulses. Ásgeir's band played live on *Made In Chelsea* while the cast discussed their feelings recently. Not the ideal showcase for the intimate affection of 'Was There Nothing?' but don't dismiss this shy wonder by association.

7

STUART HUGGETT

Peggy Sue
Choir Of Echoes
Wichita

Perhaps you had Peggy Sue marked as just another band of Mumford-ogling folksters – all charm and smiles but ultimately precious little in the way of spike or substance. If so, 'Choir Of Echoes' might just be the album that makes you and the last few remaining nonbelievers see the light. Peggy Sue's fourth LP impresses throughout, a record of soulful depths and heady, emotional highs. From the haunting, melancholic gospel of 'Come Back Around' to the campfire simplicity of 'How Heavy The Quiet That Grew Between Your Mouth And Mind,' the band's pace and drive never let up. The sultry doo-wop of 'Longest Day Of The Year Blues', meanwhile, may well be the catchiest tune you hear this winter.

8

HAYLEY AVRON

JAMES ORLANDO

Reviews

Hospitality
Trouble Fire

New York band Hospitality's second album opens with singer Amber Papini howling about "*ghosts in your bed!*" over a theatrical pop mood piece, and doesn't stop experimenting from there on in. There's Parisian bongo funk on 'Going Out', sparse jazz on 'Sullivan' and a splash of synthy, Smithsy sci-fi on 'Rockets And Jets'. Better still are the adorable 'It's Not Serious' and 'Sunship', a superb Vampire Weekend-style electro-hymn called 'Inauguration' and Stereolab doing The Who's 'Tommy' on the delightful 'I Miss Your Bones'. Ironically, a few Hospitality tracks outstay their welcome. But overall 'Trouble' bristles with the freedom of early Breeders or Throwing Muses.

■ MARK BEAUMONT **8**

Guardian Alien
Spiritual Emergency
Thrill Jockey

It's a safe bet that a group led by its drummer won't be given to making top-down meat'n'spuds rock. Greg Fox, a New York-based titan of avant-garde percussion, makes sure of this as he leads the multi-directional dazzle of 'Spiritual Emergency', their third album. Shamelessly self-indulgent, you imagine they seek to jam themselves into a sonic trance as much as the listener. The presumably cross-legged Fox opens the album on tablas ('Tranquilizer') before his equal-parts-gonzo-and-disciplined style takes hold as GA lock into freak mode. Of special note among the jarring vocal splices and monolithic psych guitar is the 22-minute title track, which starts off talking about yoga and then grooves like Can at their wiggiest.

■ NOEL GARDNER **7**

Quilt
Held In Splendor
Mexican Summer

Boston's Quilt checked into a Brooklyn studio with the intention of combining hipster flavour with dreamy psychedelia, and have come up with a record that brings a crisp newness to arrangements straight out of 1967. So there's a lot of Love here – and Zombies and Buffalo Springfield too – but 'Held In Splendor' also joins Tame Impala's 'Lonerism' and even Connan Mockasin's 'Caramel' at a strange place where psych-rock sounds pioneering and fresh. This is all helped by the virtuosity of tracks like 'Mary Mountain', where surf guitar meets motorik trance, and 'A Mirror', with its thrash-along fuzziness. Yet Quilt really shine when Anna Fox Rochinski, Shane Butler and John Andrews harmonise impeccably over the spooky melodies of 'Saturday Bride' and 'Secondary'.

■ MATTHEW HORTON **8**

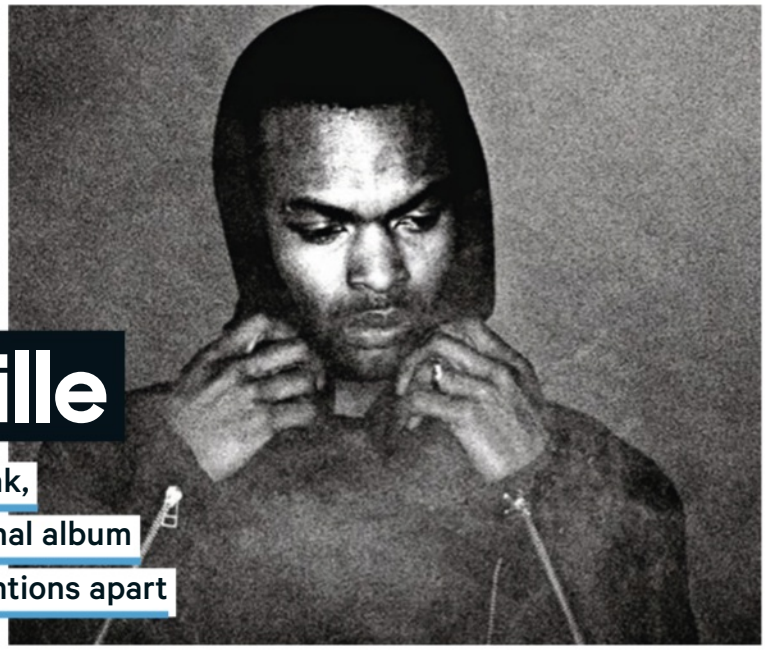
Cooly G
Hold Me EP Hyperdub

Brixton producer Merissa Campbell has built a steady profile over the last five years. She's released a string of 12-inches and an album, 2012's 'Playin' Me', for Hyperdub, and built a solid presence on the UK club scene, where she floats between garage and grime at one end, and deep house and dub at the other. 'Hold Me' is the latest step in her dancefloor march, but it doesn't quite work. The title track feels tentative and without climax, with a refrain that feels more like a nervous wish than a bold proclamation, and 'Oi Dirty' and 'Molly' are repetitive and without the emotional depth normally present in Hyperdub releases. It's functional, but dispensable.

■ ALEX HOBAN **4**

NME ALBUM OF THE WEEK

Actress
Ghettoville



Darren Cunningham's bleak, unsettling and possibly final album blows dance genre conventions apart

To introduce his fourth album, 'Ghettoville', Actress – aka south London's Darren Cunningham – issued a cryptic statement online describing it as "the bleached-out and black-tinted conclusion of the Actress image". The message ends, simply: "RIP Music 2014".

If this really is Actress' final record, it's a tragedy, because throughout a career that began in 2004 with the 'No Tricks' EP being released on Werkdiscs, the record label he co-founded, Cunningham has created an electronic vocabulary that's all his own. The last Actress album, 2012's 'RIP', explored the subtle cadences between techno, electro, two-step and sub-bass, and dragged them into a previously unexplored netherworld.

This follow-up is another record on which familiar dance genre conventions are blown apart and twisted instead into something utterly bleak and strangely alluring. On 'Street Corp', the breezeblock-blasting bass notes are crunchier than a gravel pit. 'Corner' is like a massive hip-hop tune played at the wrong speed on a Ford Escort tape deck, with its horn-driven melody muted and forlorn. 'Rap' is as close as Actress will ever get to slinky R&B, while 'Image' is a bit like Prince's bold electro-funk made in a boiler room in late-'80s Detroit.

At 16 tracks long, 'Ghettoville' is demanding and uneasy going, oscillating between the sort of punchy club beats that could give you a hernia and soundscapes so deep and affecting you'd expect to hear them at an art installation. 'Time', a twitchy two-step boomer, moves at a glacial pace, and if you listen to 'Contagious' for too long – with its slo-mo strings, pitched-down-and-down-a-bit-more vocals, abdomen-shaking bass and noises a bit like when you blow on top of empty bottles – you will feel distinctly unsettled.

There is a faint sense of familiarity on a trio of tracks: the chirrupy, vaguely Fuck Buttons-ish 'Rims', the icy Aphex piano of 'Our', and 'Gaze', which subverts the sounds of '90s piano house. But mostly 'Ghettoville' is an exciting new landscape to get lost in and explore, even if it does spell the end for Actress.

■ KATE HUTCHINSON **8**

▶THE DETAILS

▶**RELEASE DATE** January 27 ▶**LABEL** Ninja Tune/Werkdiscs ▶**PRODUCER** Darren Cunningham ▶**LENGTH:** 66:03 ▶**TRACKLISTING** ▶1. Forgiven ▶2. Street Corp ▶3. Corner ▶4. Rims ▶5. Contagious ▶6. Birdcage ▶7. Our ▶8. Time ▶9. Towers ▶10. Gaze ▶11. Skyline ▶12. Image ▶13. Don't ▶14. Rap ▶15. Frontline ▶16. Rule ▶**BEST TRACK** Rims

FILM

Inside Llewyn Davis

The Coens' portrait of a struggling '60s Greenwich Village folk singer is brave and absorbing

Even by the Coen brothers' standards, Llewyn Davis is an odd character. The Coens love a loser, but what makes Davis so different from, say, The Dude in *The Big Lebowski* is that it's almost impossible to like him. Played by Oscar Isaac, Davis is a folk revival singer trying to make it in Greenwich Village in the early '60s – just before Bob Dylan's arrival on the scene – and although he has talent, he's an obnoxious freeloader who gets his best friend's girlfriend pregnant.

But Llewyn Davis has had his fair share of grief. He was once in a duo, but his partner killed himself, and he feels strangled by a thriving folk music industry that wants cheap material for hit songs and won't recognise his gift. In one immensely complicated scene, he blind-auditions in Chicago for a character called Bud Grossman, based on the legendarily tough impresario Albert Grossman, who managed Dylan. Davis performs an old English ballad, 'The Death Of Queen Jane' – in full, as all songs are performed in the film – about a queen begging her husband for a caesarean section to save her baby's life. It's a transfixing moment, promptly squandered by Grossman's suggestion that he should consider joining a more pop-orientated folk group.

Davis' trip to Chicago has roots in an actual experience. The Coens discovered a book about a little-known, but significant, Greenwich Village folk singer called Dave Van Ronk and loosely based their script around his story. There are other characters who echo real people (co-stars Justin Timberlake and Carey Mulligan mimic Peter, Paul & Mary; John Goodman's Roland Turner is very Doc Pomus-like), and for a visual starting point for the film, the Coens looked to the cover of Dylan's second album, 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan'.

▶RELEASE DATE
January 24
▶DIRECTORS
Joel and Ethan Coen

Inside Llewyn Davis is about a time and a place, and also a study of the human condition. Relatively unknown before being cast in the lead role, Isaac, who was Juilliard-trained and has clear musical chops, manages to be both arresting and restrained. The complexities of his character are revealed most effectively through song, and the secret star of the film is renowned soundtrack and record producer T Bone Burnett, who worked with Isaac on his character for months before shooting and provided the film's music (with a little help from Marcus Mumford, among others). Burnett was also the music producer on *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* – a very different film, despite sharing a folk soundtrack. There are many comic moments in *Inside Llewyn Davis*, but it's not funny; it's bleak, difficult, and among the Coen brothers' most absorbing and brave.

9

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

Dog Bite
Tranquilizers
Carpark

At the beginning of second track 'We', there are 40 seconds when a riff ripped from Pulp's 'Babies' mellows out into a blissed-out, Jarvis-on-Valium sway. It's great, but by far the best moment of 'Tranquilizers'. The problem here is not a lack of ideas or ability: flutters of Beck abound in 'Wonder Dark', 'Tuesdays' is all haunting goth-pop of a Girls Names ilk and the guitar lines on 'L'Oiseau Storm' are perfectly sweet and lilting. The problem is that the Atlanta band – fronted by former Washed Out keys man Phil Jones – drown all their melodies in pointless haze and bored (read: boring) vocals, and you end up feeling that if they can't be bothered to care, why should you?

6

■ LISA WRIGHT

The New Mendicants
Into the Lime
One Little Indian

A cup of tea. A Twix. Both simple pleasures that deliver exactly what you expect. To this list add The New Mendicants, an indie supergroup for anyone who still owns a duffle coat. Their debut album sounds just as you would assume from a combination of Joe Pernice (of the Pernice Brothers) and Teenage Fanclub's Norman Blake: Big Star melodies, Byrds harmonies and early Beatles pop sensibility (the chorus of 'If Only You Knew Her' is pure 'A Hard Day's Night'). The 10 songs fly by in 31 minutes of melodic pleasure, with nary a thought for the deep-house revival. Extra marks for penning a great indie Christmas song in 'A Very Sorry Christmas', then releasing the album in January.

7

■ BEN CARDEW

PLAY IT AGAIN

RECENTLY RATED IN NME

Warpaint
Warpaint
"If 'The Fool' presented them as ethereal hippies with musical nous, 'Warpaint' drives them forward as masters of their talent, loaded with ambition and prowess." (*NME*, January 18) **9**

September Girls
Cursing The Sea
"Their sound has been a popular one in the past half-decade, but it's been nearly three years since the last album by Vivian Girls, and this is a more than adequate stand-in." (*NME*, January 4) **7**

Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings
Give The People What They Want
"The 10-person outfit specialise in note-perfect deep soul and funk that can hold its head up alongside songs from '70s soul singers Lyn Collins and Vicki Anderson." (*NME*, January 11) **7**

Against Me!
Transgender Dysphoria Blues
"Against Me!'s sixth tackles singer Laura Jane Grace's transition from male to female, and also encompasses death, drug addiction and fascism – but you can still totally skank to it." (*NME*, January 18) **7**

Big Ups
18 Hours Of Static
"Though the New York toilet circuit suits their scuzzy, slacker snarl-punk perfectly, this debut album shows they're setting their sights much higher." (*NME*, January 18) **8**

Action Bronson

Irving Plaza

New York

January 11

The chef-turned-rapper from Queens chomps through his 'Blue Chips 2' mixtape

Irving Plaza is jam-packed and sweltering, and a thick fog of weed smoke clings to clothes and hair long after Action Bronson, the chef-turned-rapper from Queens, New York, starts his hour-long occupancy of the stage. There's not a lot of room, so Bronson's movements during the set mostly involve some sweaty interaction with the front row. Tonight is not one of those crazily physical gigs he's become renowned for; instead, he ravenously chomps his way through the bulk of last year's mixtape 'Blue Chips 2', most effectively during the mellow and acoustic version of 'Amadu Diablo'. The latter's impact is surprising, and provides a slow, gentle and touching end to the evening.

MISCHA PEARLMAN

7

DANIEL TOPETE

NME GIG OF THE WEEK

Fat White Family, King Krule, Childhood, Jerkcurb

The Queen's Head, London
Saturday, January 11

The cream of London's music play Fat White Family's Slide-In club night at a grotty pub in Brixton

On show tonight: a madman's cocktail of south London rascals, pretty-boy dreamers and cowpunk shock-artists. It's an odd bill, but the nervous tension generated by the coming together of contrasting styles makes for an exciting showcase of London's booming music scene. The night begins with the gentle guitar playing of **Jerkcurb**, aka 20-year-old crooner-cum-troubadour Jacob Read. Turns out the comparisons between Read and mildly cheesy American rock musician Chris Isaak are accurate. Elevated by his angelic vocals, Read's lonely, lovingly crafted lullabies brim with sexual longing and luscious ennui, momentarily transforming this grotty Brixton boozer into a last-chance saloon for the broken-hearted.

Childhood

SETLIST

- Sweeter Preacher
- Blue Velvet
- Mount Chiliad
- Pinballs
- Right Beneath Me
- Solemn Skies
- Bond Girls

King Krule

Also in attendance are Rough Trade's dream-indie four-piece, **Childhood**. Leaving aside the fact that Ben Romans-Hopcraft, Dan Salamons, Jonny Williams and Leo Dobsen radiate rock-star mystique – they are all indecently handsome – the London-based band work wonders with the venue's limited sound system. Their set – a soaring and punchy hybrid of The Stone Roses and dreampoppers AR Kane – weaves a host of beautiful guitar lines into a sweet whole. 'Solemn Skies' sounds so perfect it almost seems pre-recorded.

How will Archy Marshall, aka **King Krule**, top that? They don't call him King for nothing, and his bus-shelter junk-punk proves captivating in the kind of small venue he's already outgrown. Live, the 19-year-old's tetchy moroseness hardens into full-on rage, with his face a permanent scowl and his spasming body language that of a pilled-up gangster taunting stone-faced door staff. This macho front seems developed and unnatural, and makes the many incidences of tenderness and vulnerability in Marshall's music all the more poignant. 'Baby Blue' is especially heart-rending, bringing the crowd to a standstill with its weeping fretwork and time-slowing central line: "*Baby... stay for a while*". Time constraints mean his show ends abruptly, but not before he chases the blues away with his anthem, 'Easy Easy'. The singalong chorus and noughties indie vibe, free tonight of the haunted reverb that veils the album version, recalls a hoodied-up Arctic Monkeys. The now bouncing front row collapses towards the stage and on to Archy's toes.

King Krule

SETLIST

- Untitled new song
- Baby Blue
- The Crocodile
- Lizard State
- La Luna
- Easy Easy

It's one thing to hold your own against Childhood, but quite another to withstand the howling onslaught of **Fat White Family**. Inevitably, Marshall's downtempo sketches can't help but be upstaged by the goon-degenerates, who take the stage to end the night. Opener 'Auto Neutron' is received cautiously,

ROGER SARGENT, DAN BASSINI

Fat White Family

SETLIST

- ▶Auto Neutron
- ▶Is It Raining In Your Mouth?
- ▶Wet Hot Beef
- ▶Heaven On Earth
- ▶Special Ape
- ▶Wild American Prairie
- ▶Garden Of The Numb
- ▶Bomb Disneyland
- ▶Cream Of The Young

but by the time 'Heaven On Earth' goosesteps into life 250-odd Krule fans have morphed into a single heaving mass of bone-breaking mosh. There are people climbing up six-foot speaker stacks, crawling over photographers to grab at the band and being turned upside-down so their legs are sprouting up from the melée. All the while beer splatters hard against frontman Lias Saudi's naked torso like piss against a pub wall as he contorts his painfully thin frame and writhing jawline like early-'70s Iggy Pop. There's a song on the subject of excrement and one about destroying a major tourist attraction, called 'Bomb Disneyland'. Later comes 'Is It Raining In Your Mouth?', a sinister garage-rock foot-stomper about ejaculation which, on account of its fevered epicness, is destined to become the Fat Whites' biggest tune. They're the antithesis of a band like Childhood who want to rise above the ugliness of modern life – FWF choose, instead, to wallow in it, and in doing so they demand you have fun of the most disgraceful variety. On 'Wild American Prairie' Lias swan-dives into the crowd and is carried around the room as the demonic country-rock reaches its noise-punk finale. Then, when they're done skewering hipsters and vacuous Chelsea girls on the sea shanty 'Garden Of The Numb', they finish up with the supremely disturbing 'Cream Of The Young': an insidious mix of desert-town cabaret, cheap Soho erotica and London's seediest, darkest underbelly.

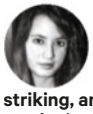
Afterwards, I'm accosted by a shaggy Irishman who, drunk and with little to no regard for personal space, splutters in my ear: "BEST FUCKIN' ROCK'N'ROLL BAND IN THE CITY". The boozy Dubliner's definitely onto something. ■ JOHN CALVERT

8

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD

Jay, 29
"Fat White Family have awesome power! Heavy and sludgy. Reminds me of [Detroit proto-punkers] Death."

Cas, 23
"Didn't want to believe the Fat White Family hype, but call me a convert. Even if they are a bunch of secret yuppies."



Eva Klein, 21
"I found King Krule's peculiar voice completely striking, and his music is so much nicer in a small venue."

Amy, 18
"King Krule is even better live – real and raw, and the band as a whole seem to have loads of fun when they perform."

MORE GIGS

Cass McCombs
The Workman's Club, Dublin

Saturday, January 11

Backed by a three-piece fluent in countrified folk rock, Cass McCombs moves from one song to the next without stopping and only speaks to say goodnight. But this show isn't detached and efficient, it's about allowing the California-born nomad to realise his wry Americana without fuss. 'Big Wheel' and 'That's That' glide along with a swampy, Creedence Clearwater Revival-like brawn that's perfect for a sweltering room. During the lap-steel-infused 'Angel Blood', sections of the crowd grow distracted and are shushed by others. But a mesmerising 'County Line' and an encore of 'The Same Thing' end a night of quiet intensity.

■ CIAN TRAYNOR

7

Honeyblood
The Old Blue Last, London

Tuesday, January 14

Glasgow-based duo Honeyblood's music is a grungy take on the slacker pop the likes of Best Coast have peddled in recent years. Tonight, drummer Shona McVicar and singer and guitarist Stina Tweeddale start with the recently released 'Kissing On You' and 'Bud'. The latter is cleansed of the reverb that clings to the recorded version, creating a country-rock sound. The American influence rests heavily in Tweeddale's voice too, and her accent is frequently overwhelmed by an excessive transatlantic twang. Their sound is much stronger when they loosen up, as on the powerful and carefree 'All Dragged Up'. A promising preview of their debut album.

■ DAVID RENSHAW

7

Against Me!

Music Hall Of Williamsburg, New York
Thursday, January 9

Everything has changed for the Florida punks – but it's helped them improve as a band

"*How would you even recognise me?*" bellows Against Me! frontwoman Laura Jane Grace during 'FuckMyLife666', a track from their just-released sixth album 'Transgender Dysphoria Blues'. It's a pertinent question. Big change came for this band in May 2012 when Grace, then called Tom Gabel, announced she was transgender; and the politically charged Florida punks have since shuffled their line-up. But this is the same rebellious and riotous band from Florida who've been going since 1997. That much is clear when they launch into second song 'Pints Of Guinness Make You Strong' from their 2002 debut 'Against Me! Is Reinventing Axl Rose'. Mid-tune, a crusty crowdsurfer gets onstage, genitalia accidentally on display. He jumps bare butt-first back into the crowd as Grace looks on with a huge smile on her face.

Her smile remains for the next 90 minutes, as the four-piece tear through 19 more songs. It's a mix of old and new, each song charged and life-affirming. The quartet's new song about gender reassignment, 'True Trans Soul Rebel', is greeted with the same warmth as 'Sink, Florida, Sink' from 2003's 'Against Me! As The Eternal Cowboy', and given the same adoration as classic tune 'I Was A Teenage Anarchist' from 2010's 'White Crosses'. Against Me!'s confrontation of a difficult issue has improved them as a band. Everything has changed, but everything is the same.

■ MISCHA PEARLMAN

7

SETLIST

- ▶FuckMyLife666
- ▶Pints of Guinness Make You Strong
- ▶New Wave
- ▶Walking Is Still Honest
- ▶True Trans Soul Rebel
- ▶Cliché Guevara
- ▶White People For Peace
- ▶I Was A Teenage Anarchist
- ▶Unconditional Love
- ▶Turn Those Clapping Hands Into Angry Balled Fists
- ▶I Still Love You Julie
- ▶Pretty Girls (The Mover)
- ▶Don't Lose Touch
- ▶Black Me Out
- ▶Miami
- ▶Thrash Unreal
- ▶The Ocean
- ▶Sink, Florida, Sink
- ▶Two Coffins
- ▶Rapid Decompression
- ▶We Laugh At Danger (And Break All The Rules)

Joanna Gruesome/ September Girls

The Lexington, London
Thursday, January 9

Thrills, savagery and a dose of raw fun at the Fortuna POP! showcase

For four years now, Fortuna POP! have used the supposedly dead month of January to present a showcase of artists on the label at a night they like to call The Winter Sprinter. They also released the debut album by Dublin's September Girls, 'Cursing The Sea', on January 6. The logic is simple: music fans pine for gigs in winter, so why not provide them, and if you're a tiny operation like Fortuna POP! without much cash for marketing, you can almost guarantee more reviews if you put out records when few other labels do. To prove the point, 'Cursing The Sea' got a big leg-up in the press when it came out, becoming Rough Trade's album of the week, and tonight's show, headlined by Joanna Gruesome, is a sell-out. Sean Price, who runs Fortuna Pop! alone, looks delighted and so he should be: September Girls and Joanna Gruesome are the best two signings he's made since The Pains Of Being Pure At Heart, breathing new life into a label that, at 18 years old, is now a certified survivor.

It's only when the room marginally thins out for Joanna Gruesome's set that it becomes apparent many people have come tonight to check out September Girls, including Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie. You can see why he would be interested in the five-piece; not unlike The Jesus And Mary Chain, they drench sweet, '60s pop in reverb and fuzz, sometimes creating an effect that My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields, who once played in the Scream, would recognise. They're stony and aloof, too – essentially four frontwomen in a line stage-front (Caoimhe Derwin and Jessie Ward on guitars, Lauren Kerchner playing a keyboard and Paula Cullen on bass, all of whom take a lead vocal at some point during their set) and backed by Sarah Grimes, their thunderous drummer. They play nine tracks from the album, new song 'Veneer' and B-sides 'Wasted' and 'Flesh'. When they're good, as they are on their two final tracks 'Green Eyed' and 'Sister', they vent the darkness and violence in their sound, but they're not yet as sonically interesting live as they are recorded, and you sense their nervousness playing to a packed house with Gillespie among those eyeballing them.

Joanna Gruesome, who formed in Cardiff after, they say, meeting at an anger management class – a claim so good it doesn't matter whether it's true or not – have a mildly different line-up for tonight and a few forthcoming dates supporting Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks. Bassist Max Warren's got exams on, so Matt Green from Nottingham's Plaids is joining them on guitar, and George Nicholls, who usually plays guitar, is on bass. They play without glitches and make for a perfect band to follow September Girls. In common is a love of melody coupled with ferocity (best summed by Alanna McArdle's candied, then suddenly murderous, vocals), but there's less poise with Joanne Gruesome and a stronger desire to slay. The musical palette is broader, too, and the many strands of influence in their wide-eyed sound – indie pop, hardcore, emo, shoegaze, thrash – become more distinct when they play live, making them both an intoxicating and sometimes confusing proposition. It's not until late in their set, when they blast through 'Graveyard' from their debut album 'Weird Sister', released last September, that they truly sound like their own band. In that song, performed as it is with power and clarity, is unbelievable promise for their future; elsewhere, such as on 'Secret Surprise' ("*I dream of pulling out your teeth!*") and album opener 'Anti-Parent Cowboy Killers', they provide everything you crave from a January gig – thrills, savagery and a massive dose of pure, unadulterated fun.

8

■ PHIL HEBBLETHWAITE

September Girls

SETLIST

- ▶Heartbeats
- ▶Left Behind
- ▶Talking
- ▶Money
- ▶Another Love Song
- ▶Cursing The Sea
- ▶Ships
- ▶Veneer
- ▶Wasted
- ▶Flesh
- ▶Green Eyed
- ▶Sister

Joanna Gruesome

SETLIST

- ▶Madison
- ▶Secret Surprise
- ▶Tugboat
- ▶Anti-Parent Cowboy Killers
- ▶Satan
- ▶Graveyard
- ▶Sugarcrush
- ▶Lemonade Grrrl

JOANNA GRUESOME ARE AN INTOXICATING AND SOMETIMES CONFUSING PROPOSITION

Alanna McArdle of Joanna Gruesome

Joanna Gruesome on... September Girls

Owen Williams, guitar and vocals: "We've played with them before – summer 2012 in Nottingham at a show that was a warm-up before the Indie Tracks festival. Orca Team played too and I remember it being a really good night. We're fans of September Girls. In common between us and them, there's a root in the C86 thing, but we're pretty different bands. They sound a bit like early Bangles, and maybe The Jesus And Mary Chain. There's a darkness there."

September Girls on... Joanna Gruesome

Paula Cullen, bass and vocals: "We bumped into them at a random, scary pub before the Indie Tracks warm-up show. We'd never met each other but we had a pint together and hung out after the gig too. We're all fans of their album, and I knew a lot of the songs off it beforehand. It's great that we're both on Fortuna POP!. There's a good spirit on the label and we were very pleased when Sean [Price] asked to put out our album."

JENN FIVE, DEREK BREMNER

MORE GIGS

Baby Strange
KOKO, London
Friday, January 10

Armed with Black Rebel Motorcycle Club riffs and a Jesus And Mary Chain snarl, Glasgow's Baby Strange have gained a reputation for a live show that oozes with punk attitude and cheap thrills. But tonight their early songs such as 'Friend' and 'Never Enough' get lost in translation. Perhaps the venue is too much too soon for Johnny Madden and brothers Connaire and Aidan McCann. A rough version of Peter Bjorn And John's 2006 tune 'Young Folks' shakes up the sleepy crowd, though. And by closer 'Pure Evil', featuring frontman Madden's disillusioned cries of "*tired of my generation*", the crowd's reaction to the band has become reassuringly riotous. **7**

■ RHIAN DALY

Girl Band
Green Door Store, Brighton
Wednesday, January 15

Misleading names be damned, because Dublin's Girl Band are four polite young men whose post-punk manoeuvres are refreshingly testosterone-free. Frontman Dara Kiely casually dispenses dry wit as his group summon up effortless blasts of flamethrower noise. Guitarist Alan Duggan is Girl Band's special weapons expert, firing up the heavy machinery grind of 'You're A Dog' and the ear-scouring scrape of current single 'Lawman'. A pounding take on post-dubstep producer Blawan's techno nightmare 'Why They Hide Their Bodies Under My Garage' seals Girl Band's forward-thinking credentials. **7**

■ STUART HUGGETT

Menace Beach

The Social, London
Tuesday, January 14

Leeds indie supergroup make a fine fist of recreating Seattle grunge

Plaid shirts. Ripped jeans. Badly bleached, bedraggled hair that's completely covering the singer/gargler's face. Brain-mulching and melodic sludge rock roaring from the speakers like minced Mudhoney. No wonder this rammed, sweaty basement stands stock still and stares at the band, dumbfounded: Leeds duo Menace Beach look like the grunge exhibit at the Natural Rock History Museum has come to life, perhaps magically animated by the distant quiet/LOUD lilt of new Pixies songs.

Were this a Seattle basement at the height of grunge, of course, we'd be pulling light fittings off the walls, splinters of the bass guitar out of our cheeks and our mates off the ceiling, but the band – named after an old Nintendo game rather than a lost weekend in Magaluf – make a fine fist of recreating the scene. Singers Ryan Needham and Liza Webster clearly live on a diet of L7, Hole, Sonic Youth and 'Surfer Rosa', but their supporting cast of northern indie luminaries have helped them warp and mould their filthy US rock sounds into psych sparklers – tonight Matt 'MJ' Johnson from Hookworms wrings seven circles of hell from his guitar, Nestor Matthews from Sky Larkin pummels the drums and friend of the band Matt Spalding slings out basslines. Rob Lee from Pulled Apart By Horses and Paul Draper from Mansun, who both played on Menace Beach's recent 'Lowtalker' EP, are sadly absent.

The result inside The Social sounds like 'Bleach'-era Nirvana tanked up on candyfloss and ketamine and throwing up on the waltzers at a fairground. 'Honolulu', 'Where I Come From', 'Tastes Like Medicine' and 'Fortune Teller' are all Yorkshire cousins of Pond's 'Xanman' but drenched in even more acid and grit. Even when 'Nervous' steals the bassline from Pixies' 'Gigantic' they make it sound vibrant and elastic. Adding a fervent Sub Pop slant makes for a scintillating new diversion for the current wave of garage psych. The statue-still response from the crowd may well be down to concerns over the authenticity of a British band tackling a style so deeply rooted in Slackersville, USA. But the band quiver, squall and thrash through such a passionate half hour of grunge 2.0, that the frenzied waves of crowd mania will soon come crashing down on Menace Beach. **7**

■ MARK BEAUMONT

SETLIST

- ▶Teenage Jesus
- ▶Drop Outs
- ▶Where I Come From
- ▶Honolulu
- ▶Tastes Like Medicine
- ▶Dream Out
- ▶Burn Out
- ▶Nervous
- ▶Fortune Teller

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Wild Beasts

Three years after last album 'Smother', Wild Beasts return. Frontman Hayden Thorpe discusses taking fourth record 'Present Tense' on the road.

'Present Tense' sees you embracing more electronics. How will that affect your live show?
"The album has actually been really intuitive to play live. It's been a learning curve, but one that's made the show far more widescreen. These new songs have a swagger that makes for an attack-minded show."

You've described this album as the band sounding "like a gang again". What did you mean by that exactly?
"We engaged our inner teen. Often when you first start out you mark your patch – 'This is what we stand for, this is how we're going to do things'. That early mission statement fed into the way we wrote the record."

How are you preparing for big venues like London O2 Brixton Academy again?
"Brixton evokes all kinds of intense feelings. It felt like now or never with that show. It's a mythical place. There was a distinct point last year when I was washing the dishes and this wave of adrenaline came over me. I thought, 'You know what, fuck this. I need to play live again.' I miss that sicky feeling of terror you get. It's an incredibly liberating sensation."

▶THE DETAILS

▶**DATES** Manchester Albert Hall (March 26), Glasgow The Arches (27), Bristol O2 Academy (30), Cambridge Corn Exchange (31), London O2 Academy Brixton (April 1) ▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC ▶**PRICE** £15; Manchester £16.50; London £18; Glasgow £14.50 ▶**ON SALE** now ▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.50-£3.40 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2.25 booking fee

Royal Blood

Ben Thatcher and Mike Kerr have been announced as support for Arctic Monkeys at the Sheffield band's Finsbury Park gigs this summer, but before that they'll take the thundering riffs of debut single 'Out Of The Black' on the road.
▶**DATES** Southampton The Cellar (February 13), Cardiff The Globe (14), Exeter Cavern (15), Leicester The Musician (17), Norwich Waterfront Studio (18), Sheffield The Harley (20), Hull Fruit (21), Bedford Esquires (22), Tunbridge Wells Forum (24), Reading Face Bar (25), Oxford Art Bar (26)
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Angel Haze

In December, Angel Haze leaked her debut album 'Dirty Gold' after growing frustrated with her label. Now she returns to the UK for the first time since. Expect heaps of attitude.
▶**DATES** Manchester Gorilla (March 7), Birmingham O2 Academy 2 (8), London Heaven (11)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
▶**PRICE** £11, London £13.50
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▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with £1.10-£1.35 booking fee.

Radkey

Brothers Dee, Isaiah and Solomon Radke make the trip over from St Joseph, Missouri to preview material that could feature on their debut album, and play the rollicking riffs of their 'Cat And Mouse' EP.
▶**DATES** London Sebright Arms (February 23), Birmingham Hare & Hounds (24), Nottingham Rock City (25),

JENN FIVE, DAVID WALA, AMY BRAMMALL, ED MILES

Leeds Cockpit (26), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (28), Newcastle The Cluny (March 1), Manchester Night & Day (3), Bristol Louisiana (4), London 100 Club (5)
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Marissa Nadler

Nadler's imminent 'July' album is her sixth record in a decade, and marks a shift into more cosmic territory with the help of Sunn O))) producer Randall Dunn.
▶**DATES** Bristol The Cube (April 20), Halifax Square Chapel (21), Brighton Komedia (22), London Café Oto (23)
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Frank Turner

The *Celebrity Mastermind* winner heads out on a new arena tour after the release of the 'Polaroid Picture' EP on February 3.
▶**DATES** Cardiff Motorpoint Arena (February 6), Nottingham Arena (7), Edinburgh Corn Exchange (8), Manchester Arena (9), Plymouth Pavilions (11), London O2 Arena (12), Portsmouth Guildhall (13), Winchester Guildhall (14)
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Pusha T

Terence 'Pusha T' Thornton brings his solo project to London.
▶**DATES** London KOKO (June 6)
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The Bohicas

The Essex indie-rock quartet follow up their appearance on last year's Monster NME Radar tour with a one-off date.
▶**DATES** London Black Heart (February 27)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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Marika Hackman

The 21-year-old singer-songwriter will start work on her debut album soon. In March she'll take a break from those sessions to play live.
▶**DATES** Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (March 11), Newcastle Think Tank (12), Manchester Soup Kitchen (13), Sheffield The Harley (14), Birmingham Hare & Hounds (16), Oxford Cellar (17), London Hoxton Bar & Kitchen (18)
▶**SUPPORT ACTS** TBC
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▶**FROM** NME.COM/tickets with 70p-£1 booking fee; Glasgow from ticketmaster.co.uk with £2 booking fee; Sheffield from harleylive.co.uk with £1.36 booking fee

US rockers Radkey head to the UK in February

TOUR NEWS

Glass Animals

The Oxford band have announced they'll join St Vincent on her European dates next month. The quartet will support Annie Clark over six dates, including London O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (February 20) and Manchester Cathedral (21).

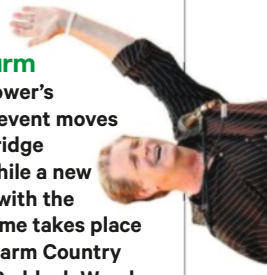
FESTIVAL NEWS

Bugged Out Weekender

More names have been announced to play at the event, which will take place over the weekend of March 7-9 in a new location: Pontins in Southport. UK producer Joy Orbison has joined the line-up alongside Jacques Greene and The 2 Bears. Tickets are available from buggedoutweekender.net.

Hop Farm

Vince Power's original event moves to Tunbridge Wells, while a new festival with the same name takes place at Hop Farm Country Park in Paddock Wood, Kent between July 4-6, with The Beach Boys' Brian Wilson headlining.



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GOING OUT

Everything worth leaving the house for this week

Warpaint

California's foremost tie-dyed prog beasts ditch the palm trees for the cobbled streets of Brighton and Oxford. At these two special shows you'll hear spellbinding psych from the LA four-piece's new, self-titled album.

▶**DATES** Brighton Dome (January 23), Oxford O2 Academy (25)

▶**TICKETS** £15-16 with £1.60 booking fee, from NME.COM/tickets

Lonely The Brave

Cambridge rock types Lonely The Brave start 2014 as they mean to go on, by kicking off their winter tour with a trio of rowdy gigs that will showcase their Biffy-style debut EP 'Backroads'.

▶**DATES** Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (January 26) Manchester Deaf Institute (27), The Scholar Leicester (28)

▶**TICKETS** £5-9 with £1-£1.43 booking fee, from NME.COM/tickets

Dry The River

The east London-based folk-rock gang aren't venturing too far, keeping it low-key and local with a show at Hackney's newest venue, Oslo. Expect a preview of their second record, which is mooted for release this year.

▶**DATES** London Oslo (January 22)

▶**TICKETS** £15 with £1.80 booking fee, from NME.COM/tickets

Nathaniel Rateliff

Soul-drenched acoustic guitarist and friend of Mumford & Sons, Nathaniel Rateliff leaves his Colorado home for a UK jaunt. He'll be airing tracks from new album 'Falling Faster Than You Can Run'. Come with a shoulder to sob on.

▶**DATES** Leeds Belgrave (January 23), Liverpool Leaf (24), Glasgow Broadcast (25), Manchester Soup Kitchen (26), London Dingwalls (28).

▶**TICKETS** £8 with £1.30-£3.77 booking fee, £10 with £1.50 booking fee for London, from NME.COM/tickets

Kyla La Grange

Bidding farewell to the gothic witchery of her 'Ashes' album in favour of a poppier electro sound, a reinvigorated Kyla La Grange preps the release of her second album with this duo of shows.

▶**DATES** Southampton Joiners (January 25), London Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen (28)

▶**TICKETS** £7 with £1.75 booking fee for Southampton, £9 with £1.50 booking fee for London, from NME.COM/tickets

Bobby Womack

From his towering 1960s soul standards to his Damon Albarn-produced output for XL, Bobby Womack has remained one of the greats over six decades. Expect career-spanning excellence.

▶**DATES** Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (January 26), Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (27)

▶**TICKETS** £34.50-44.50 with £1.50 booking fee for Liverpool from liverpoolphil.com, £30 with £1 booking fee for Glasgow from glasgowconcerthalls.com

Amazing Snakeheads

Grotty Glaswegians play a one-off show in Islington. Come prepared for rowdy punk, sleazy jazz jams and sinister sex-disco grooves.

FIVE TO SEE FOR FREE

Thrills don't come cheaper than this

1. La Shark
Start The Bus, Bristol
The London indie band also play Bournemouth on the 24th.
▶Jan 23, 8.30pm

2. Girl Band
Old Blue Last, London
Dublin-based grunge gang get their Nirvana on in east London.
▶Jan 23, 8pm

3. Peggy Sue
Rough Trade East
Buy the folk act's new album instore and get in for free.
▶Jan 23, 7pm

4. Disraeli Gears
A Nation Of Shopkeepers, Leeds
Jeff Buckley and St Vincent vibes
▶Jan 22, 8pm

5. Moats
Shipping Forecast, Liverpool
Not *quite* free, but just £2 new music showcase.
▶Jan 22, 8pm

La Shark

Amazing Snakeheads

▶**DATES** London Electrowerkz (January 23)
▶**TICKETS** £6.50 with £1.50 booking fee, from NME.COM/tickets

I Break Horses

Following Sigur Rós support slots, I Break Horses' Maria Lindén brings the synth swells and heady beats of her band's new album 'Chiaroscuro' to London.
▶**DATES** London Village Underground (January 23)
▶**TICKETS** £10 with £1.50 booking fee from NME.COM/tickets

EVENTS

Teenage

Based on Jon Savage's acclaimed book, this film investigates 20th-century youth subcultures, with music from Deerhunter's Bradford Cox (see p14).
▶**DATES** Opening January 24 at London BFI, ICA, JW3 and Belfast QFT
▶**TICKETS** London £11 with £1 booking fee from bfi.org.uk, Belfast £4 from queensfilmtheatre.com

Benny And Jolene

Anyone can come down to the world premiere of this comedy film about an indie-folk duo. It stars Submarine's Craig Roberts and Fresh Meat's Charlotte Ritchie. DJs from Domino records play in the bar after.
▶**DATES** London BFI (January 24)
▶**TICKETS** £15 with £1 booking fee from bfi.org.uk

Jagwar Ma

STAYING IN

The best music on TV, radio and online this week

Jagwar Ma

Tom Ravenscroft

On their debut album 'Howlin', Aussie band Jagwar Ma displayed a wide range of influences from electronic sounds to '60s pop to The Stone Roses. Jono Ma and Gabriel Winterfield have a dig through their collection to show off the records that inspired them as they curate a guest mix to coincide with Australia Day.
▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7pm, Jan 24

Mogwai

Marc Riley

'Rave Tapes', Mogwai's first album since 2011's 'Hardcore Will Never Die, But You Will', is released this week. To celebrate, the Glaswegians pop by the 6Music studio to play some tracks and talk about the making of the album.
▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 7pm, Jan 23

Guns N' Roses

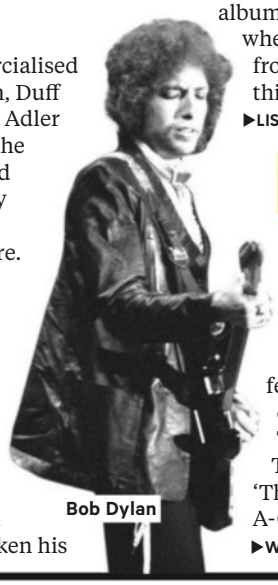
Born To Be Wild: The Golden Years Of American Rock – Welcome To The Jungle

The last of three programmes exploring US rock focuses on Guns N' Roses, and the band's mission to cause trouble within an increasingly commercialised music industry. Slash, Duff McKagan and Steven Adler provide insight into the band's early days, and the likes of Tom Petty and Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil also feature.
▶**WATCH** BBC Four, 9pm, Jan 24

John Cooper Clarke

BBC 6Music

Since Jarvis Cocker gave up his Sunday Service slot for a year, punk poet John Cooper Clarke has taken his place to play some of his favourite songs. He continues his residency this week with more punk classics.
▶**LISTEN** BBC 6Music, 4pm, Jan 26



Bob Dylan

Cate Le Bon

John Kennedy

The Cardiff musician brings last year's brilliant 'Mug Museum' album to the XFM studios, where she'll play one song from the record each night this week.
▶**LISTEN** XFM, 10pm, Jan 27

Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan: The Folk Years

This 2012 documentary looks at Dylan's early years as a folk star, exploring his political views and life experiences, and featuring rare live footage of him playing 'All Along The Watchtower', 'Mr Tambourine Man', 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' and more.
▶**WATCH** Sky Arts, 9pm, Jan 27

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THINK TANK

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■ Compiled by TREVOR HUNGERFORD

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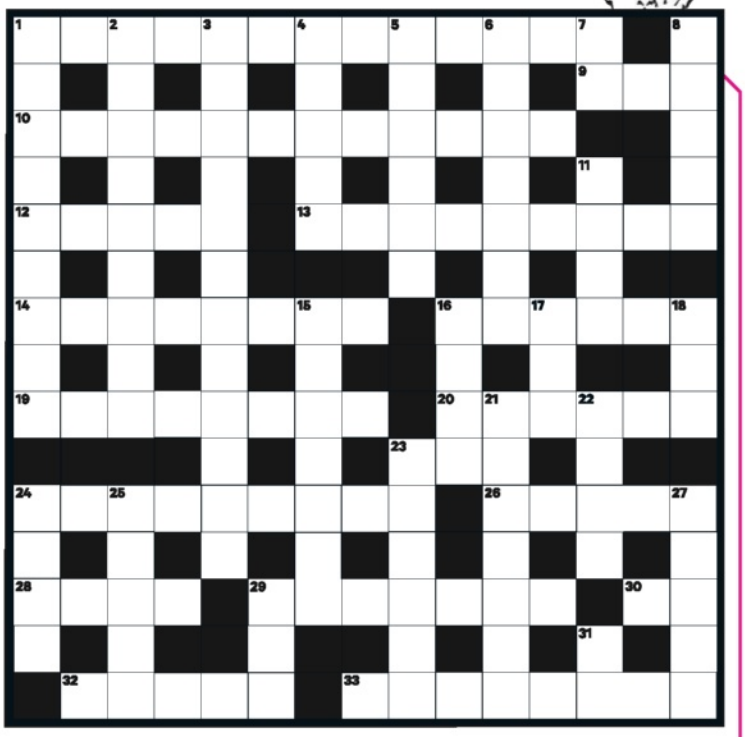


CLUES ACROSS

1 Dear all, wishing you weren't here. Yours truly, agony mob (6-7)
9+21D "*Break me on the 37th hour/Tout me, doubt me, show me all of your power*", 2011 (3-2-5)
10 Terrible UK acts I'd seen doing Arctic Monkeys' music (4-2-3-3)
12 The girl fronting Warpaint or Metric (5)
13 This was a very big blow for 30 Seconds To Mars (9)
14 Unbelievably, this was EMF's follow-up to 'Unbelievable' (1-7)
16 The _____ Boys sounding more masculine and mature with a young David Bowie (6)
19 Similarity between a Tame Impala song and a White Stripes album (8)
20 (See 32 across)
23 Chvrches taking a shot at a number (3)
24 "*One Friday night I took a pill or maybe two*", 2013 (4-2-3)
26 It just wasn't right for Canadian punks Nomeansno to release this album (5)
28 James were given a put-down with this single (4)
29 (See 3 down)
30 'Everyone Says __' to David Bowie (2)
32+20A Suede song or an '80s TV kids' show (5-6)
33 Americans who had to 'Brighten The Corners' before entering the 'Terror Twilight' (8)

CLUES DOWN

1 Temples number to spellbind us (9)
2 "*Fallen for a guy, fell down from the sky*", 2013 (9)
3+29A Tony Joe White song that got Randy Crawford into a wet state late in the day (5-5-2-7)
4 For their final album they had to 'Cut The Crap' (5)
5+27D Let drum go in the arrangement made on album by Beck (6-5)
6 "*Well I go out somewhere, then I come home again*", 2006 (7)
7+18D This is a call from Vampire Weekend (2-3)
8 Deals arranged by big hit-makers of the '70s (5)
11 Sitar player ____ Shankar who influenced George Harrison (4)
15 1970 was an exceptional year with this album by Canned Heat (7)
16 The Justified Ancients Of __ __ (aka The KLF) had a Top 10 hit with 'It's Grim Up North' (2-2)
17 Interpol number taken from Johnny Cash (1-1-1)
18 (See 7 down)
21 (See 9 across)
22 'Celebration' and 'Cherish' were '80s hits from ____ And The Gang (4)
23 She was the girl for Them's Van Morrison and at times for The Doors and Jimi Hendrix (7)
24 The Associates were in a silent and resentful mood on the release of this album (4)
25 Hurts to have a banishment for releasing an album (5)
27 (See 5 down)
29 ___ Evans, jazz guitarist, or ___ Scott-Heron, rap pioneer (3)
31 Beady Eye shortly to make a recording (2)

DECEMBER 14 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 I'm Aquarius, 10 Monkees, 11+8D Teenage Fanclub, 12 True Colours, 13+23A Cut Copy, 14+18D Thom Yorke, 15 Utter, 19 Outfit, 21 Sail, 25 Liar, 26 Sam, 32 Red, 33+30A The Wire, 34 Stretch
DOWN 2 Man Out Of Time, 3 Quench, 4+28A Absolute Beginners, 5 Intruders, 6 Steps, 7 Imitations, 9 Death, 16 Mic, 17 All I Want, 20 Tornado, 22 All Star, 24 Yeezus, 27+17A About A Boy, 29 Gore, 31 Rich

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, February 4, 2014, to: Crossword, NME, 9th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

QUIZ

■ Compiled by ALAN WOODHOUSE (answers on page 67)

1 Which UK indie band's 1987 debut album was titled 'George Best' after the football legend?

2 What was the name of the 1997 hit single that Manic Street Preachers co-wrote for Kylie Minogue?

3 Which two bands did Andy Bell have UK hits with before joining Oasis in 2000?

4 How many original members do Kraftwerk have left in the band?

5 Which rock icon uses the alias Bernard Shakey when making films?

6 Which US rock singer has a role in the cult 1991 movie *Point Break*?

7 Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds' 1997 album 'The Boatman's Call' was inspired by the frontman's break-up with which other high-profile singer?

8 What is the name of the group in which Kasabian's Serge Pizzorno and comedian Noel Fielding make music together?

9 Which of these artists did NOT record for Motown – Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson or Ray Charles?

10 What is The Stone Roses' highest-charting UK single?

11 Which rock star's real name is Frank Edwin Wright III?

12 Which band's 2007 debut EP is called 'The Boy I Used To Be'?

13 Which rock legend's early bands included The King Bees and The Lower Third?

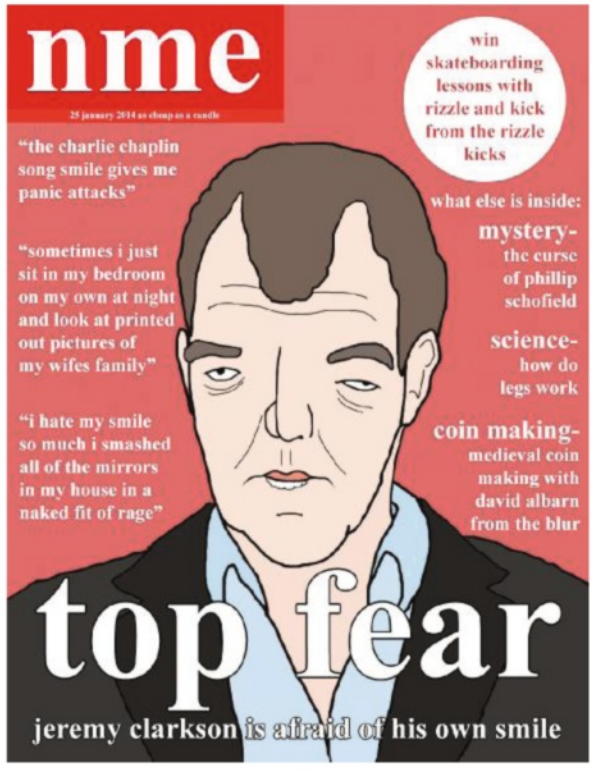
14 Which south London indie act got their name after flicking through the Bible?

15 True or false? Vaccines frontman Justin Young is British PM David Cameron's second cousin.

47

THE NME COVER THAT I GONE AND DONE

■ by CHRIS SIMPSONS ARTIST

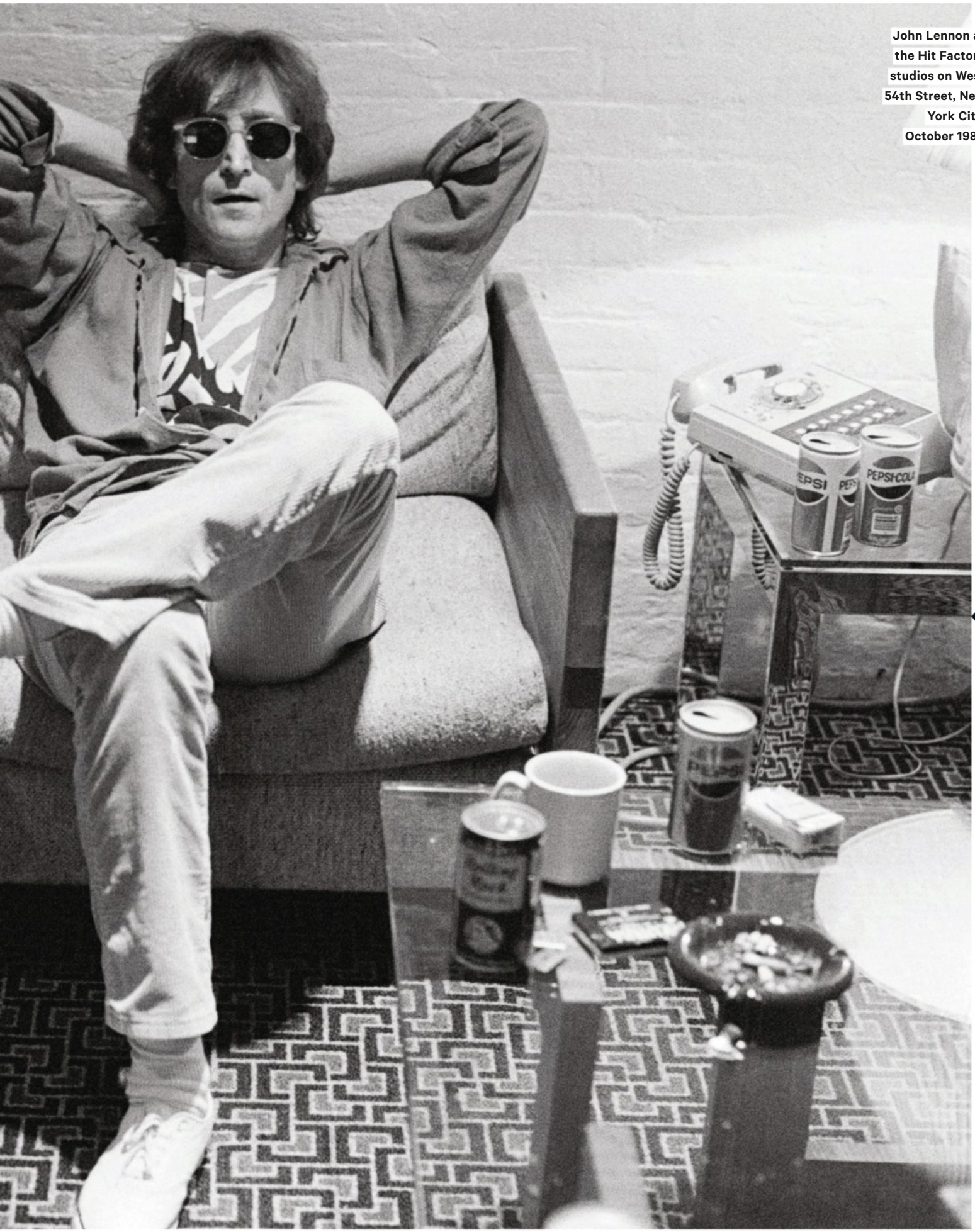


DEAN CHALKLEY, REX

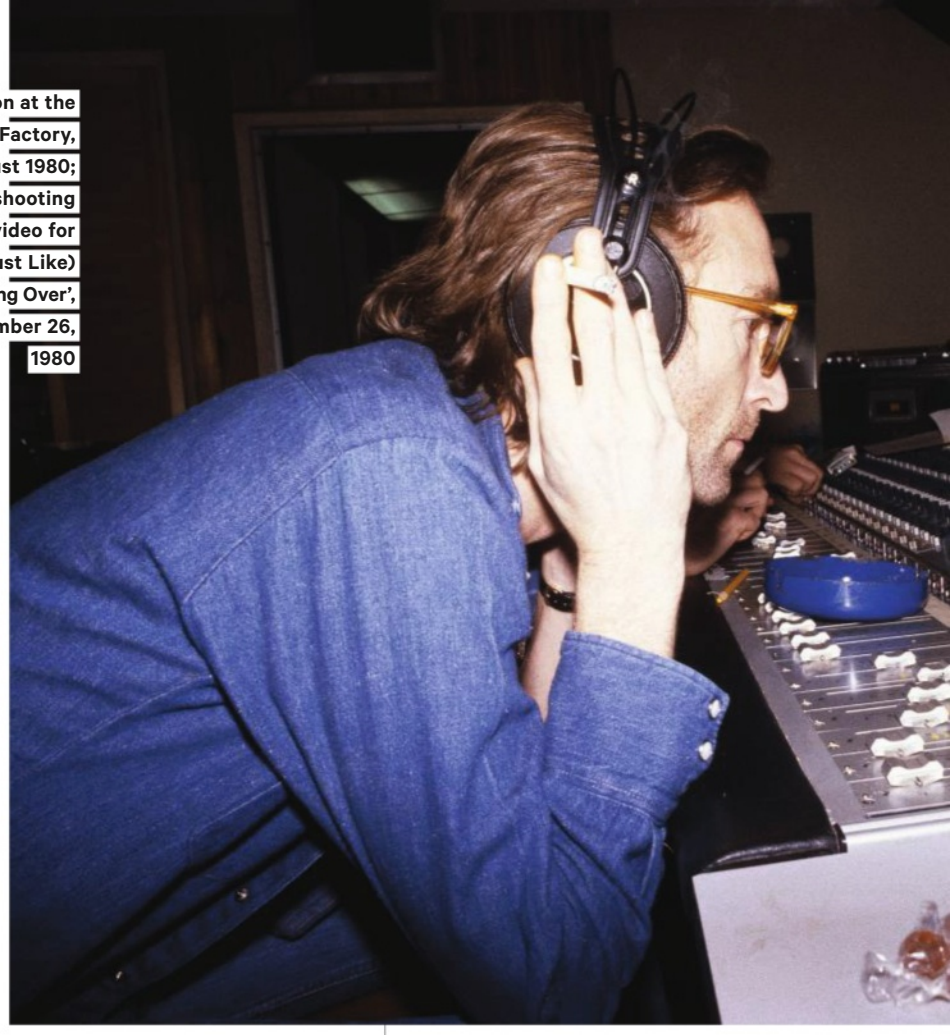
The final voyage

Thirty years on from 'Milk And Honey', John Lennon's final album, Barry Nicolson discovers an adventurous, restlessly creative spirit behind the popular myth of the settled homemaker

PHOTO BY BOB GRUEN



John Lennon at the Hit Factory studios on West 54th Street, New York City, October 1980



Lennon at the Hit Factory, August 1980; (below) shooting the video for '(Just Like) Starting Over', November 26, 1980

Thirty years ago this month, John Lennon released his final album. At the time of his death in December 1980, 'Milk And Honey' was weeks from completion, and on its release in January 1984, it picked up where its predecessor 'Double Fantasy' had left off, reinforcing the popular myth of John's 'househusband' years. Yet, while by the end he seemed to have found some measure of happiness and optimism, his journey to that point had been nothing like the Normal Rockwell-worthy picture of domestic bliss that has since been perpetuated. "According to magic," says the writer Robert Rosen, "if you project a certain message and people perceive it as truth, then it *is* the truth. John and Yoko's magic was successful, but it was only a tiny fraction of what was really going on."

Who was John Lennon in the last year of his life? By late 1979, he was resigned to watching the wheels from the solitude of the Dakota building, his high-gabled ivory tower on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Occasionally, an old friend would call to tell him about a gig at CBGB or try to tempt him down to Studio 54, but he had as little interest in 'scenes' as he had in *being* seen. He still loved reading about himself in the supermarket tabloids – even if the information was incorrect, which it almost always was, it was his last tether to the life he had left behind – but he hadn't spoken to the press for years.

In the absence of a public record, he kept a private one, writing fastidiously in his journals and occasionally committing his thoughts to tape. Over the years, some of those tapes have surfaced, and they make for disturbing listening. His first entry, dated September 5, 1979, begins with a description of his mother's house in Liverpool, but he quickly tires of the exercise, sighing, "This is boring and I can't be bothered doing it." Moving onto the subject of his '60s peers – Dylan, Jagger and McCartney – he talks about how "the difference between now and a couple of years back was that whenever there was a new thing out by any of the aforesaid, I used to feel a sense of panic and competition", whereas today, "I would send out for their albums... but there doesn't seem any point." He dismisses them all – "not forgetting the singing dwarf, Mr [Paul] Simon" – as "company men". From there, his thoughts meander back to childhood, recalling the time when, lying on the bed at age 14, "with my hand on my mother's tit", he briefly entertained the notion of taking things further. "I always think I should have done it," he says, "presuming she would have allowed it."

"John was bored, watching TV and smoking weed"

Fred Seaman, Lennon's PA

The tapes reveal a man who is drifting without purpose, unsure of what he ought to be doing with himself. The birth of his son Sean in 1975 had been a life-changing event for John, and when his contract with EMI expired four months later, he took the opportunity to retire from music and devote himself to his family. Yet while John adored Sean, once the 'terrible twos' set in, the task of raising him was largely left to a nanny. He still loved Yoko, but he had a childlike dependency on her – his pet name for her was 'Mother' – that left him feeling forlorn and frustrated whenever she wasn't there, which was often. Yoko spent her days in the downstairs office or away on business, negotiating deals, making investments and buying up real estate John would never set foot on. He was lonely, affection-starved and borderline-celibate. "He was dissatisfied with the marriage," says Robert Rosen, who came into possession of Lennon's journals shortly after his death. "He wanted to spend more time with Yoko, he wanted to hang out with her. They'd been married for 12 years, and the sex wasn't what it had been in the beginning. He was dissatisfied about that, too."

In a building long said to be haunted by the ghosts of its former residents, the Dakota's most restless spirit was flesh and blood. When Fred Seaman joined the Lennons' staff in February 1979 as John's PA, he found a man who was "bored and depressed, who spent much of his time watching TV, sometimes smoking weed. The myth of the happily retired househusband was an alibi fabricated to hide the reality that John had lost his muse and motivation to make music." Even his political idealism had vanished. With a presidential election on the horizon in 1980, John favoured Ronald Reagan – the Republican former governor of California, who had once called for a "bloodbath" against anti-war protestors – over Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter, whose inauguration he had attended in 1977. "John was disappointed when he was introduced to Carter, who didn't seem to know who he was," says Seaman. "The affront was made worse by the fact that Carter had been known to quote Bob Dylan lyrics. On the other hand, he'd met Reagan and

found him charming and engaging. It pleased him when Reagan defeated Carter, but it had nothing to do with ideology: he simply liked Reagan better."

All this is at odds with the image of a happily retired ex-Beatle who had found contentment in the simple joys of bread-baking and homemaking, but that there are conflicting portraits of John Lennon in the last year of his life should come as no surprise. This was a man of deep contradictions, who had once urged people to "*imagine no possessions*" yet owned so many of them that one of his five apartments in the Dakota served as a dedicated warehouse for hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of clothes, art and musical equipment – most of it never used. There was a duality to almost every aspect of his character, a volatile equilibrium between light and dark; "part monk", he was fond of saying, "and part performing flea".

John's mental wellbeing may have been in question, but physically at least he was looking after himself. He still smoked cigarettes, but aside from Thai stick marijuana and the occasional magic mushroom, he had stopped taking drugs, alcohol included. For the first time in his life, he was paying attention to his diet: his friend, the photographer Bob Gruen, recalls that shortly after Sean's birth, "John and Yoko decided to cleanse their bodies by not eating solid food for 40 days – everything went through the juicer. After a couple days, John told me that all he could think about was food, so he started reading cookbooks, fantasising about one recipe for a while, then moving on to another. During that time he started on the macrobiotic diet. When I first met him he could only put milk on cereal, but he became a pretty good cook."

Gruen also disputes the idea that John was unhappy with his marriage and that Yoko had somehow 'hypnotised' him into ending his relationship with his mistress May Pang in 1975. "John's time with May was not a 'love affair'," he says. "May was his secretary, and like many wealthy businessmen, he slept with his secretary. The whole time they were together, he was in touch with Yoko every day, asking to come home. John and May were very close, but the title of her book says it all – *Loving John*. She was loving him."

Yet Pang has always said that their relationship continued, in one form or other, until 1980. Robert Rosen says the journals unequivocally show that John "still carried a torch for May. He still saw her occasionally, but not as much as he wanted to, and he eventually stopped because he was cheating on Yoko and it was too difficult for him to carry that on. He wanted them both, but he couldn't have both. May was light and fun to be around; Yoko was heavy, but she was survival". Pang's last contact with John came in May 1980, when he called her from his hotel room in Cape Town. He had travelled to South Africa, alone, at Yoko's behest: she believed that journeying in a southeastern direction would be karmically cleansing for him. This was typical behaviour for the Lennons: since the mid-'70s, they had consulted with a council of psychics, seers and astrologists – the most influential being a tarot reader named Charlie Swan who they kept on staff – on almost every detail of their lives, from real-estate purchases to potential employees to whether or not it was safe to leave the apartment. John's belief in these matters was perhaps not as absolute as Yoko's, but he nonetheless abided by their decrees.

"Tarot and magic," says Rosen, "became a way for them to conduct their lives and business affairs. They were always looking to get the upper hand in their negotiations with Apple Records, so they applied it to that. Magic is a psychological thing – if you're dealing with somebody who believes it's real, then it's real. But, really, it was money magic: Ono had so much money that she was able to manipulate people into doing things."

Just as important as tarot was numerology. In particular, John was fascinated with the reccurrence of the number nine throughout his life. He was born on October 9. His first home was 9 Newcastle Road. The Beatles' first gig at the Cavern took place on February 9, 1961. Brian Epstein discovered them on November 9 that same year. Exactly five years later, he met Yoko. He had written songs called 'Revolution 9', 'One After 909' and '#9 Dream'. Then there was Sean, who shared his father's birthday. According to Fred Seaman, this was no coincidence: "Mother's always trying to have babies on my birthday," he told him.

As he neared 40, John was growing increasingly fascinated by the sea: he had started taking sailing lessons around Long Island Sound, where he and Yoko owned a house, and he became engrossed in books about nautical warfare and celestial navigation. That summer, he tasked his sailing instructor Tyler Coneys with finding a boat ↦

The storytellers

Lennon's confidants and collaborators

Fred Seaman
Served as Lennon's personal assistant from February 1979 until his death in December 1980, spending almost every day in his company. In 1992 he published *The Last Days of John Lennon*, a terrific memoir of his time in Lennon's service.

Bob Gruen
The legendary rock photographer who met John and Yoko in 1971. He became a friend and confidant of the Lennons and remains close with Yoko to this day. In 2005 he published a volume of Lennon photographs titled *John Lennon: The New York Years*.

Robert Rosen
The author (left) of *Nowhere Man: The Final Days Of John Lennon*, written from his first-hand knowledge of Lennon's journals. His latest book is titled *Beaver Street: A History of Modern Pornography*.

Earl Slick
Slick (right) played guitar on 'Double Fantasy' and 'Milk And Honey', but is perhaps best known for his work with David Bowie, having appeared on numerous albums with him since 1974, from 'Young Americans' right up to 2013's 'The Next Day'.

Tony Davilio
Served as the arranger on 'Double Fantasy' and 'Milk And Honey', winning a Grammy for his work on the former. More recently, he has written a book, *The Lennon Sessions*, about his experiences of making the records.

George Small
Played keyboards on 'Double Fantasy' and 'Milk And Honey' and is a successful composer in his own right. Other artists he has worked with include Carl Perkins, Eric Clapton and Graham Parker.

BOB GRUEN

John and Yoko outside the Dakota building, NYC, November 21, 1980

and crew to sail to Bermuda. The destination, of course, was not picked at random: like South Africa, Bermuda lay southeast of New York, and was deemed karmically 'safe'. Coneys soon hired a boat, the Megan Jaye, a 43-foot sloop captained by an experienced skipper named Hank Halsted, and on June 4, the five-man crew – John, Halsted, Coneys and two of his cousins – set sail from Newport, Rhode Island.

The voyage started off smooth and serene, but what the seers hadn't taken into account was that the 700-mile tract between Newport and Bermuda is one of the most unpredictable stretches of ocean in the world. Two days in, the weather abruptly changed and the Megan Jaye found herself in the midst of a violent mid-Atlantic storm, incapacitating the Coneys with seasickness and leaving John and Halsted to navigate the sloop through the 20-foot waves crashing off her bow. Exhausted from 48 sleepless hours at the helm, the captain eventually had no choice but to turn the boat over to its most inexperienced crew member, who was sceptical that his "little guitar-playing muscles" were up to the task.

Six hours later, when Halsted woke from his sleep, he found a man in a state of rapture. Stood alone at the helm with the elements raging around him, John raged right back at them, bellowing curses and half-remembered sea shanties from his childhood in Liverpool. He had spent the last few years adrift on a sea of ennui; here, in the eye of a maelstrom that all his money, celebrity and psychic advisors could do nothing to quell, he finally felt alive again.

When the boat eventually docked in Bermuda, the John Lennon who stepped ashore was not the same man who had boarded at Newport. During his fallow years in the Dakota, John would start songs but never finish them; now, in a rented villa on the outskirts of Hamilton, they suddenly came pouring out of him. Fred Seaman, who arrived with Sean a few days later and who appears on some of those formative tape-recorder demos, believes that "steering the boat through that storm reawakened some primal confidence in John. I was aware that I was witnessing the rebirth of a creative genius who'd been dormant for too many years".

Yoko was thrilled by John's rediscovery of his muse, and started laying the groundwork for a new album to be produced by Jack Douglas, the Aerosmith producer who had helped engineer 'Imagine'. According to Seaman, however, while the theme of family and domesticity was always paramount in John's mind, his vision for the albums that became 'Double Fantasy' and 'Milk And Honey' was originally quite different.

"Yoko told John that she intended to do her own record, to be released simultaneously with his," he says. "At first John was furious and resisted. He wasn't inclined to share the spotlight. Once he agreed to the idea, she upped the ante and suggested they share an LP, with his songs on one side and hers on the other. Again, John resisted, but she eventually got her way. The concept of alternating songs – the "heart play" – was Yoko's friend Sam Green's idea. Yoko worried that if John's songs were on one side and hers were on the other, most people wouldn't bother to listen to her music, so Sam suggested that if the songs alternated, listeners would have no choice but to listen to her songs too. Sam also suggested invoking the poets Robert and Elizabeth Browning. John and Yoko then sold the fairytale version of the genesis of 'Double Fantasy' to a gullible public and the myth became accepted truth."

Nevertheless, once the Lennons arrived at the Hit Factory studio in midtown Manhattan in early August, the sessions moved remarkably quickly – after the band of top-end session players assembled by Jack Douglas' business partner Stan Vincent had been screened for their astrological compatibility, that is. At first, arranger Tony Davilio thought this merely an inconvenient quirk; later, it

Inside 'Milk And Honey'

YOKO ONO SAYS

"'Double Fantasy' was to show that we lived together and had separate fantasies but could be in harmony; two different sounds, not in unison but in harmony. In 'Milk And Honey' we're showing that John and I could go through the same differences but in the end be saying 'I love you'.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"'Milk And Honey' is an incomplete conversational medium... a fugitive piece perhaps, or literary remains."

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Like any posthumous release, it's a mixed bag, with at least three great Lennon songs, but marred by sketchiness. Yoko's material is the real surprise: 'Don't Be Scared' and 'Your Hands' are the equal of any of her late husband's tracks.

▶THE DETAILS

▶**TITLE** Milk And Honey ▶**RELEASE DATE** January 27, 1984 ▶**PRODUCERS** John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Jack Douglas (uncredited) ▶**RECORDED** The Hit Factory, New York City, August-December 1980 ▶**TRACKLIST** ▶1. I'm Stepping Out ▶2. Sleepless Night; ▶3. I Don't Wanna Face It ▶4. Don't Be Scared ▶5. Nobody Told Me ▶6. O' Sanity ▶7. Borrowed Time ▶8. Your Hands ▶9. (Forgive Me) My Little Flower Princess ▶10. Let Me Count The Ways ▶11. Grow Old With Me ▶12. You're The One

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

took on a more chilling significance. "I heard that one of Yoko's astrologers told her that nobody named 'Rick' or 'Chapman' should play on the session," he says. "I didn't know why at the time, but after what happened I was like, 'Holy shit, that's eerie.' I can't remember exactly when I heard that, but I do remember there was this one guy named Rick who was a friend of Jack's, who was really pissed because Jack wanted him on the album and Yoko wouldn't allow it."

Although John privately worried about his voice and his place in the post-punk musical landscape, he was always in his element when leading a group of musicians. As keyboard player George Small recalls, "It was Yoko who was probably the most nervous and insecure person in the room. After John was shot, she became much more mellow, but at that point she didn't like anybody fooling around with her directorial authority. But it was such a unique concept to alternate her songs with John's, and that's gotta be intimidating, even if you're married to him."

It's been widely reported that at some point during the recording, having heard John was making music again, Paul McCartney rang to suggest a collaboration only for Yoko to refuse to put his call through. Even if this is true, it's likely that John wouldn't have appreciated the offer anyway: Tony Davilio recalls a separate occasion "when I was sitting in the control room with John and his assistant came over to say that George and Ringo were on the phone, and that they'd like to stop by the studio. As I remember it, John's words were something to the effect of 'politely beg them off'."

While John wasn't as estranged from Paul as he was from George – he was enraged by how little he was mentioned in Harrison's 1980 autobiography – their relationship remained complex. According to Robert Rosen, John was delighted when McCartney was arrested with half a pound of weed in Japan earlier that year, excitedly scribbling in his journal, "McCartney busted in Japan! Go directly to jail, do not pass go, do not collect $200!" Yet it was the release of 'McCartney II' in May that had stoked the old competitive fires in John, the same ones that used to spur him into writing his best material. He was particularly taken with 'Coming Up', which he interpreted as Paul's cryptic call for a Beatles reunion. In response he penned 'I Don't Wanna Face It' – a song that bore a rhythmic and lyrical likeness to McCartney's, and whose title served as his answer. Ultimately, he wrote in his journal, "I love Paul like a brother, but I just don't like him."

As the sessions progressed, John was growing in confidence. He was undeterred by the lukewarm critical response to his own songs on 'Double Fantasy' (Charles Shaar Murray's scathing *NME* review wished that Lennon had stayed retired "until he had something to say that was even vaguely relevant to those of us not married to Yoko Ono") and heartened by the positive response to Yoko's more contemporary, new wave-influenced contributions. His plan was to finish a second album, titled 'Milk And Honey', in January before embarking on a lengthy world tour in the spring, beginning in Japan and culminating in a triumphant return to England, where he would sail up the Mersey on the QE2 as a conquering hero. He was also planning to incorporate reworked versions of old Beatles numbers into the setlist – 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', 'She Loves You' and 'Help!' had all been mentioned, while Tony Davilio recalls hearing a driving, stripped-back version of 'Strawberry Fields Forever', "without all the orchestration and effects that were used on the original". Guitarist Earl Slick says he'd put all of 1981 aside for the proposed tour.

"I love Paul like a brother, but I just don't like him"

John Lennon

All of those plans came to an end when John was shot on the steps of the Dakota on December 8, 1980, having just returned from a session at the Hit Factory with Jack Douglas. His movements that day have been recorded in the same forensic detail as JFK's through Dallas in November 1963, but one mystery remains: during their time at the Hit Factory, Douglas had set up hidden mics to record every between-takes exchange, and planned to present the tapes to John as a gift, a candid audio journal of his comeback. Hours before his death, Douglas – who declined to be interviewed for this piece – apparently recorded him saying something he found so troubling, he destroyed the tape and vowed never to speak of it again. Controversial Lennon biographer Albert Goldman theorised that he spoke of plans to divorce Yoko; others suggested he may have remarked on the creepy fan he'd encountered outside the Dakota. No-one will ever know, but if we're going to speculate, why not speculate that, for the first time in longer than he cared to remember, John Lennon was happy, at peace with his past and optimistic about the future? That would be the most tragic scenario of all. ■

Stranger than fricti

Warpaint's fractious sessions for their second album sound exhausting, but it's the only way they know how to conjure their peculiar magic, they tell Hazel Sheffield

on?

It's the greyest November day you can imagine in the small industrial city of Enschede, Holland – so misty that the sky seems to have collapsed into the streets. Backstage at the Nationaal Muziekkwartier, a six-venue theatre complex that's hosting the tiny Crossing Border festival, Warpaint sniff at the rider of sliced cheese and bread in the communal green room before shutting themselves away to watch French zombie drama *The Returned* on a laptop in their dressing room.

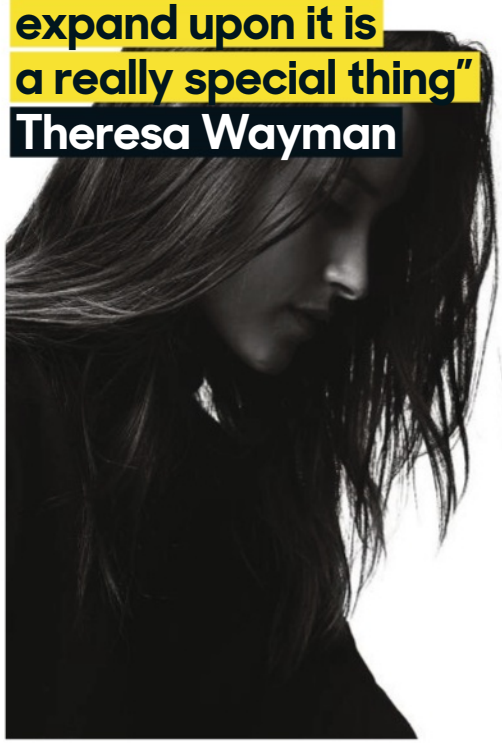
Later on, moments before their set, they gather backstage in a strip-lit concrete room. "Second-to-last show," someone says. "I can't wait," replies bassist Jenny Lee Lindberg. They play to about a hundred people who don't know their songs in a slot between a Dutch spoken-word poet and a compère wearing a dickie bow who says, in his best gameshow host voice, "Thank you, ladies, for Warpaint heaven!" The band are reserved, unable to shake off the winter that has invaded their mood as they toured through Russia, Switzerland and Germany – the first dates to promote their self-titled second album, which still won't arrive for three months. The hard work has barely begun.

Crossing Border is a community festival attended by locals and staffed entirely by volunteers, who eat toast, jam on acoustic guitars and play table football with the other bands while Warpaint hide away. No-one looks up when singer/guitarist Theresa Wayman and drummer Stella Mozgawa drift in, still dressed in their travelling scrubs, and sit gingerly on the edge of peeling black leather sofas to talk. Their manager Jonny Dawson joins them, which feels strange. He later admits that the band asked him to sit in because they were nervous about talking to *NME*.

With the exception of Stella, who is 27, all of Warpaint are in their thirties, and lead separate lives when they're at home in LA. Theresa tends to her eight-year-old son Sirius in a big old house in Echo Park, where she lives with her mother, who doubles as her nanny, and her younger brother, an aspiring music producer. "He's a year younger than James, they get along really well," she says, referring to her boyfriend, James Blake. Jenny lives further north in Mount Washington, with her husband, the visual artist Chris Cunningham. Her silver wedding ring is missing its large opal stone. Singer/guitarist Emily Kokal lives with her sister, a photographer, and her sister's cats. Stella, who was born in Sydney, just moved into a new place on her own not far from the others.

Stella is the only band member who seems upbeat today, perhaps more accustomed to an itinerant life thanks to childhood stints away from Sydney in her parents' native Poland, and her previous career as a session musician. This Continental nowhere town couldn't be further from the beaches and mountains of LA. Or the desert out in Joshua Tree, where Warpaint hired a four-bedroom house in March 2012 to hole up and record their second album with British producer Flood (New Order, Depeche Mode, U2). "Joshua Tree is really an otherworldly kind of place. It seems like it draws out that within your own self," says Theresa.

They hired a space out of town to get away from the city's distractions. Theresa admits that while they have a practice space in LA, rehearsals there are often interrupted by other plans. "Being able to have an idea and then expand upon it the next day and the next day ↦



"Being able to have an idea and then expand upon it is a really special thing"
Theresa Wayman

"It got super-tedious and I just wanted it to be finished"
Jenny Lee Lindberg

"We're all emotional bitches, you know. Our job is getting along"
Stella Mozgawa

was a really special thing, a unique moment for us," she says.

We've only been talking for 15 minutes, but Jonny suddenly asks me to wrap up. "Soundcheck," he shrugs. I ask if I can come down and watch them soundcheck. "Let's see how it goes," he says. I turn back to Theresa and Stella, but they're already out the door.

Warpaint seem on the defensive. When Theresa emerges from the dressing room later, she says the band would prefer to be interviewed separately so group conversations can't be taken out of context. It transpires they are unhappy with a *Dazed & Confused* article, one of the first on the new album, that she feels portrays them as "party girls or drug users". "That's not what's behind this album," she says. What is, then? "A lot of hard work, a lot of maturing, a lot of intention."

Theresa also asks for the separate interviews because, she says, they all have very different opinions that can get tangled when they're together. It turns out she's right: Warpaint are a band with no consensus. In their one-on-ones, Theresa says the six weeks the band spent with Flood wasn't enough time, while Jenny says the experience felt never-ending: "It got super-tedious and I just wanted it to be finished." Theresa admits to obsessing over demo recordings, saying she prefers her songs before they are tinkered with by the rest of the band. "I really want to make a point that whenever we're recording a song we're doing it in our own space and we've got some clean version of that moment that we could work with later," she says. Later Emily, who has been Theresa's best friend since they met as 11-year-olds in their Oregon middle-school choir, feels it's essential to allow songs to change during the writing process. "Sometimes things you get so attached to just don't work," she says.

Emily calls this "a democracy of dictators". "There's a lot of give and take," she says. "That's a part of our process as a band, that's inside the music. If we didn't have that tension I don't think the music would be that good."

And yet Warpaint have called this album 'Warpaint' as an allusion to their togetherness. Ten years since Emily, Jenny and Theresa started playing and four since Stella joined them, they say they're closer than ever to working out how to be a band. "None of us had ever experienced that cohesiveness in the band, ever, until the four of us started playing," Emily says. "We've really come to know how to play together."

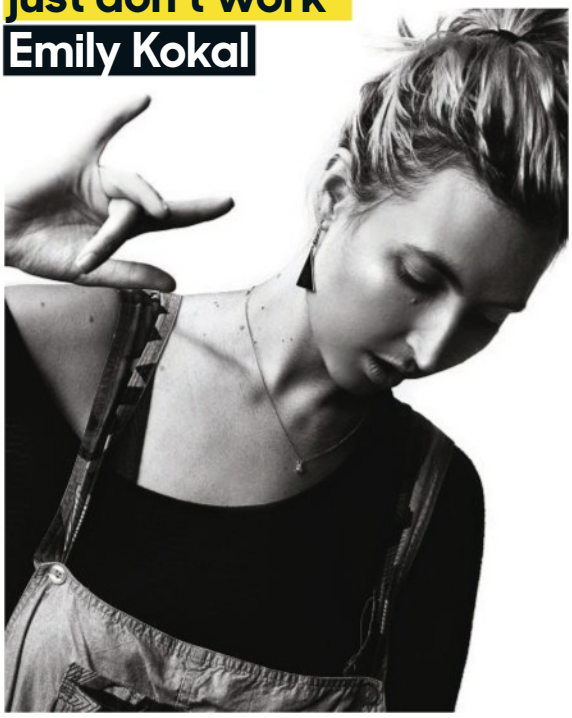
Warpaint's 2008 EP, 'Exquisite Corpse', mined moments of beauty from lengthy, rough-cut compositions. On 2010's full-length debut 'The Fool', the moments became genuine songs, like the inimitable 'Undertow'. With 'Warpaint' they come closer than ever to marrying the sense of spontaneity that characterises their live shows with good craftsmanship, letting light and space into the sound where once there was angst and noise. If 'The Fool' felt raw and exposed, 'Warpaint' is more composed musically and emotionally.

The new record is all about love: self-love, romantic love and family love. Theresa wrote the melancholy 'Son' about having to leave Sirius to tour. "I know that he's watching what I do with my life and it's an example of what's possible in his life," she says. Jenny wrote 'CC' when she realised she was falling for her husband. 'Biggy' is Emily's love song to herself, though she's initially hesitant about admitting it. "Sometimes you need to take the reins and make that kind of experience for yourself," she says, eventually. "Because that's your capacity to love, and feel love."

Emily is friendly but guarded, especially when it comes to talking about her feelings.

THE BAND ARE RESERVED, UNABLE TO SHAKE OFF THE WINTER THAT HAS INVADED THEIR MOOD

"Sometimes things you get attached to just don't work"
Emily Kokal



"My fear is that sometimes I say things and I get portrayed as airy-fairy – like I'm just out to lunch or something," Emily says. "We're not overtly political but I also don't think we're a distraction from being conscious. A lot of things are designed basically to keep you entertained and don't look past that. We're pretty thought-provoking. I've spent a lot of time writing songs that were more emotional, but I love it when you can feel that sincerity, and people are pushing their audience, or being challenging or confrontational."

'Love Is To Die' and 'Disco//very' stick out as the most challenging or confrontational songs on 'Warpaint'. The former, originally called 'Sinister', was written in a flash by Theresa and Jenny. As Warpaint toyed with it in the studio it became too poppy and immediate for a band who prefer to suggest rather than instruct. Eventually even Flood ran out of time to get it right, so they sent it to Nigel Godrich, longtime producer of Radiohead, another band with a preference for abstraction. He gave it the dark, glossy and compact feel it has today.

'Disco//very' is the only time on the album that Warpaint break out of their watery ruminations on love and honour the sense of menace that lingers in their music. "*We'll kill you, we'll rip you up and tear you in two*", they caw, each taking it in turns to sing a verse over a dry disco beat. "It's like rowdy children getting their jujus out and dancing," Jenny explains. She says they recorded it on the spot one after the other, "like an MC battle".

As a child Jenny had attention deficit disorder, and while she used to dance every night at home in Reno, Nevada with her mother and sister – original Warpaint drummer Shannyn Sossamon – it was only when she started playing music that she was able to concentrate on anything for more than five minutes. 'Disco//very' has that restless spirit, which is why she fought to keep it. "This album is a lot sexier and groovier, but the songs are way more mature than they've ever been, and I wanted something loose on there," she says.

In the end, I get to watch a bit of the soundcheck. I creep in just in time to hear the sound engineer begging the girls to hurry up and finish so the next band can take their slot. Each of them wants something to be tweaked – Emily asks for Stella's drums to be less punchy, Stella wants more reverb, Jenny wants more of Theresa's vocal. With their time running out, Stella asks for just a minute to check 'Keep It Healthy'. "Emily, would you like to go from the chorus?" she asks in a strangely formal way.

Afterwards I meet Stella for rollies on the fire escape of the venue. She is less guarded than her bandmates, with a session musician's practicality about getting on with things. "We're all ladies, we're all emotional bitches, you know," she says of their mood swings. "Our job is getting along, understanding each other, and we're still working it out every single day."

That night in Enschede, their hard-won togetherness wins out. During the show, they communicate with each other in stolen glances and private smiles, working to perfect the new songs on the stage and loosening up when they play the old ones. The self-consciousness on display in the interviews is gone, replaced by a steely sense of ambition, a survivalism that will see them through as they keep working out how to be Warpaint, how to open themselves up to talk about love all the time without being written off as party girls or hippies. "It's richer than that," Emily promises. ■

AN UNUSUAL MAGIC

Warpaint's producers on making a record that "really pushed their relationships"

Flood

"Warpaint don't have a natural leader – the driving force is constantly shifting. They definitely kept me on my toes. I can see how difficult sessions sound like bad news to an outsider, but that's actually quite normal. We did six weeks, had a break, then went to London for another session. They thought they'd get it finished, but I knew that wasn't going to happen. It took the amount of time it needed, in the end. When you're making a record, the worst situation you can find yourself in is for everyone to be getting along nicely. When people aren't arguing about things, it means it's just a couple of musicians doing a job – there's no passion. Even if it ends up in fisticuffs, you want a bit of intensity in the studio. My job is to have an objective opinion and stand back from that. It's probably fair to say this album really pushed their relationships – it got heated in there on occasion. It'd been a long time since the last record and they were really eager to improve on it and deliver something special. It was a really positive experience, in hindsight."

Nigel Godrich

"The increased pressure due to time running out and the ever-decreasing circles of decision-making meant that a couple of songs were in danger of slipping through the net. Sometimes it's really good to get some perspective from outside – it can be the quickest way out of the quicksand – so they asked me. It wasn't work, just more like trying to be useful.

"I really liked the tracks and could hear how I might be able to bring out what I felt about them. My job was to take what was there and present what I thought was coherent – like doing a really satisfying jigsaw puzzle, hopefully with no pieces upside down and all in roughly the right places. I think ultimately the record turned out great – ethereal and endearing and dark and beautiful. Flood is a master and they as a band have an unusual magic, a great fit with each other."

Renaissance

The new Factory
Islington Mill
Former Salford foundry turned bustling creative hub

Manchester

A world away from Manchester's traditional musical history, Simon Jay Catling profiles the city's ambitious DIY instigators

PHOTOS BY WILL IRELAND

Look beneath the tram timetables at Manchester's Piccadilly Metrolink station and you'll spot a series of lightboxes containing photos of a strange-looking gig. The pictures – shot by Ian Curtis' daughter, Natalie – show a night at the Bunker, a hidden warehouse in the shadows of Strangeways prison that hosts performances inside a wooden cage with no stage and minimal lighting, the band trapped within while the audience stare from the periphery. Savages declared it one of their favourite venues after playing an early gig there in May 2012 (you can watch clips on YouTube). The Bunker is also home to Sways Records, one of the city's most ambitious new DIY labels. The Metrolink photos are black and white, jarring brilliantly against the transport system's yellow-bordered design – once such a vibrant colour in Manchester's musical history, synonymous with Peter Saville, Factory Records and The Haçienda.

The key players from that era are still the city's talking heads, frustratingly. November's Louder Than Words festival was a "celebration" of music journalism that involved few current voices (and even fewer female ones). Co-curated by punk-rock veteran and Stone Roses biographer John Robb, it boasted an old boys' club of Britpop and punk-era journalists, Charlatans and Fall musicians and acid house-era photographers. On New Year's Eve, the Albert Hall, a new 2,000-capacity venue, turned with sad inevitability to the Haçienda old guard for a night with Bez and Rowetta on the bill.

These heritage figures still provide cultural currency to the extent that even the last wave of breakout names – Everything Everything, Dutch Uncles et al – struggled to escape ceaseless comparisons to the good old days 20 years on. Wu Lyf attempted to elude the same old narrative by using smoke and mirrors, but imploded because of the pressures that brought. But as Curtis' photos show, they weren't alone in a community trying to create a world away from this crumbling theme park dedicated to Manchester's musical history.

"We call ourselves culture regenerators, because we want to bring together art – be it music, words or photography – in Manchester that's creating something away from the old narrative," says Benjamin Ward, co-founder of Sways Records, sitting in a run-down pub opposite Piccadilly train station. Ward set up the label with Marten Hurley, achieving semi-national notability thanks to Money and their frontman Jamie Lee's poetic lyrics and proclamations. Sways themselves have their own propaganda writer in the verbose "fictional character" Atrocity Boy, who documents each Bunker gig in lofty prose on the label's blog (he once described Lee as "like Tantalus reaching for the forbidden fruit").

The label could be accused of obscuring their output with all this bluster, but Ward argues that no-one would be interested if they were 100 per cent truthful. "Look at how Burroughs or Bukowski described life; we're in love with that idea of mixing truths with fantasy. Why talk about our day jobs? It's depressing." It's a fair point, in contrast to the celebration of the mundane that prevails in bands like The Courteeners (who, depressingly, still sell out a Christmas show at the Phones 4U Arena every year), and an ethos carried through by Sways artists Great Waves, Bernard + Edith and Kult Country. Everyone involved with the label has big ambitions: Money signed to Bella Union when the opportunity arose, and there have also been rumours about Great Waves doing something similar. Ward, meanwhile, admits he's keen to be more than just another local DIY label. "I love pop music and I want our output to get out of the city. My favourite labels are those like 4AD and Rough Trade, who stay true to themselves but can sell records." ↦

The Sways Records collective

Islington Mill's key players, including Gnod's Paddy Shine (first left) and Shereen Perrera (fifth left)

Ward and Hurley formed Sways in 2010, which coincided with Only Joking Records co-founders Jonny Walsh and Tom Harrison putting shows on at the Corner. Back then it was a shambolic but endearing bar in the suburb of Fallowfield, where you had to walk *through* the band onstage to reach the toilet. Bands such as Mazes (now based in London and signed to FatCat), Sex Hands and Harrison's own Fruit Tones played regularly, ushering in an era of fuzzy garage rock that still squalls through the city today.

"Things have been really good again for a while," Walsh agrees, sitting in Withington's Fuel Café, just down the road from the now-closed Corner. "It's getting to the stage now where the local acts are blowing the headliners away," adds Harrison. Last summer they released a vinyl compilation, 'Manchester Standards', collecting some of the best sounds within the M60 ring road from the past four years – from psych/industrial group Gnod, to fuzz-pop bands Temple Songs and The Bell Peppers. All share a relatively American sound, a far cry from the likes of Oasis,

"The city stopped worrying what others think of it"

Jack Hardman, Ghost Outfit

who sought to define themselves against transatlantic influence.

For RL Perry, who's been promoting as Comfortable On A Tightrope since 2004, one show can be pinpointed as the catalyst for the current crop: "When Mika Miko and No Age toured here in 2007, it felt like everyone I knew who saw them went and started their own band." For three years he'd been toiling at promoting in a barely existent DIY scene. "It was really hard," he admits in the Soup Kitchen in the ramshackle Northern Quarter. "You'd have to walk around the city actively seeking out spaces, drawing maps so people could find your gigs."

A few years later, club night Underachievers Please Try Harder would start promoting at the now-closed Saki Bar, at the end of Rusholme's infamous Curry Mile. Their DJs were more likely to play the likes of Neutral Milk Hotel than the Britpop staples trotted out by so-called alternative clubs like 42nd Street and 5th Avenue. After years of bands who seemed pointedly English-sounding, be they Oasis, Elbow or I Am Kloot, the newer generation were more comfortable with these further-flung influences.

"When Underachievers started in 2008, British guitar stuff seemed to be either indie rock or Friendly Fires and electro stuff like that," recalls Ciaran McAuley, vocalist for dream-pop four-piece Patterns and regular Underachievers attendee. "Those two camps never appealed to me or Underachievers. We were both looking towards America for our influences."

McAuley meets me at Takk, a relatively new Icelandic-inspired café in the Northern Quarter. He's joined by Jack Hardman, singer of bristling two-piece Ghost Outfit. They've risen together through the city in the past two years ever since McAuley put the latter on at his own Underachievers-inspired night, Second Hand Noise. "I think Manchester is opening up and getting beyond that stage of worrying what others think of it," Hardman reflects. "People are just going out and checking out stuff for themselves again instead of waiting to be told what they should see."

To date, Ghost Outfit's debut album 'I Want You To Destroy Me' is the only LP release on Sways. "I'm into their aesthetic," he says. "We got a physical product that was all ours, which was made in the Bunker, and we got a good widespread reaction. All out of a shed in Salford."

While there's a clear American sound running through these bands, their keenest source of inspiration comes from within the city itself. "Our biggest influences are each other," says Mark Javin, who fronts Zappa-obsessed punk trio MiSTOA POLTSA. "My iPod's just full of stuff like Weird Era and Temple Songs. It's more interesting to me – I know these people so I can hear their personality in the music." Weird Era is Adam Carless, who's sitting next to him at Soup Kitchen. He's stopped playing live, preferring to experiment with snarling punk and shoegaze at home. Although he's never released anything officially, his songs seem to have been shared around half the city's musicians. "People always try and repackage this place because of the past, but there's no fucking need, it should just be left alone," he says.

I first heard of MiSTOA POLTSA when local promoters Fat Out Till You Pass Out put them on a bill. Fat Out started staging shows in 2009, and have a typically heavier remit than some other local promoters, bringing the likes of Swans and Sunn O))) to the city in the past few years. "That's the fun of being a promoter here," says co-founder David McLean, joining us at Soup Kitchen. "Building line-ups becomes about dipping in different scenes and building bridges." He too argues that the scene has always been diverse. "It's never had the outside spotlight on it. The press have always tried to fill this weird vacuum based on the past."

Nowhere provides a taste of the area's current artistic diversity better than Salford's

MiSTOA POLTSA

Gnod's Paddy Shine

"Our biggest influences are each other"

Mark Javin, MiSTOA POLTSA

Islington Mill. Rented and eventually bought by designer Bill Campbell in 2000, the former Victorian factory houses a venue, exhibition space and studios. Music-based residents include everyone from Fat Out to ambient and electronic labels like Gizeh and Sacred Tapes and psych band Horrid – and many more. The building's organisational team takes in all of these residents as part of a collective community. "It's not top-down – the focus has always been around what happens when a community of people gather together," says Mill music programmer Mark Carlin.

Gnod's Paddy Shine lives in a fourth-floor flat at the Mill, and says staying there has allowed them to expand beyond the band to projects including club night Gesamtkunstwerk and experimental industrial electronic label Tesla Tapes. "There's no judgement from anyone here," he reflects, "and there's a vibe to it you can't explain. It's a place that just allows people to do what they want to do. Swans' Michael Gira never wanted to leave, artists from all over the world keep wanting to come back."

"The place changes based on who comes and goes in the studios," says Mill visual arts co-ordinator Shereen Perera. "At the moment it seems like there are a lot of people who've come in recently that really want to make things happen." Last year's highlights included Perera's own Video Jam promotions hosting krautrock legend Dieter Moebius, with Brooklyn interactive arts collective Cheryl and electronic festival Future Everything also taking over the space.

One of its most enduring successes is Sounds From The Other City. Founded by Carlin in 2005, the multi-venue festival takes over every chapel, church and pub on the Mill's neighbouring Chapel Street; local promoters are invited to curate shows where their only restriction is budget. Established local promoters like Now Wave – who can sell out the 5,000-capacity Warehouse Project – rub shoulders with the likes of spoken-word night Paradox, meaning every pocket of the city's alternative live scene is catered for. "It started out just being inviting people whose nights we'd been to and liked, and that's stayed the same," says Carlin. "If someone came to me and said, 'Right, I've only booked one guy and he's just going to talk all day', that's genuinely OK!"

Perhaps Sounds From The Other City itself is the truest representation of what Manchester music is today: each promoter brings their own take on the city, each as valid as any other. The mistake people always make with Manchester is trying to impose a singular sound, scene or attitude on the city. The one thing that does unite Sways and their grand ambitions, MiSTOA POLTSA's fried punk and Islington Mill's diverse community is that they all share a distinct lack of interest in the tired old stories of old. As Carlin says, "The older guard represent a past, but certainly not a present." ■

Ciaran McAuley of Patterns

Who's who

Kult Country
Yousif Al-Karaghouli moved to Manchester after meeting Money in France forming this psych rock act in 2012.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'Slowburn/Amongst The Dead Forever' (Sways)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Spiritualized, My Bloody Valentine

Greatwaves
Minimal drone-pop duo formed early 2012 whose shimmering songs maintain a thin thread of tension underneath their billowing ambience.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'The Shore/Into The Blue' (Sways)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Beach House, Washed Out

Bernard + Edith
Hypnagogic pop made by a boy-girl duo, one half being Egyptian Hip Hop's Nick Delap. Their latest release was a Christmas single.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'Strange Dreams' (self-released)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Gang Gang Dance, Julianna Barwick

Fruit Tones
Sweetly shambolic 1950s surf pop, plying an enjoyable line in fruity imagery.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'One Foot Loose' (Loch Ness Monster)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Times New Viking, Real Estate

Sex Hands
Stalwart DIY punk group whose members have been in or are in several other bands including Klaus Kinski, Irma Vep and Queer'd Science.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'Season 1' (Giant Hell)
▶**FOR FANS OF** The Vaselines, Black Flag

Gnod
Experimental psych/industrial collective and Islington Mill residents. Founders of Tesla Tapes and Gesamtkunstwerk.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'Chaudelande' (Rocket Recordings)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Oneida, Wooden Shjips

Ghost Outfit
Visceral noise-rock two-piece formed in 2009 and named after a Deerhunter B-side.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'I Want You To Destroy Me' (Sways)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Deerhunter, No Age

Patterns
Anthemic four-piece formed in 2010 after meeting at uni. Signed to local label Melodic.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'Waking Lines' (Melodic Records)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Animal Collective, Cocteau Twins

Adam Carless
Former Weird Era frontman now recording solo.
▶**KEY RELEASE** Weird Era – 'Side B' (self-released)
▶**FOR FANS OF** The Jesus And Mary Chain, Nirvana

MiSTOA POLTSA
Acid-tinged punk trio. Ambitious song structures make for a thrilling lo-fi conflict.
▶**KEY RELEASE** 'When Jesus Glassed God' (Number4Door)
▶**FOR FANS OF** Frank Zappa, Ty Segall

Stephen Malkmus, London, December 1993

FROM THE VAULTS

A crack in the Pavement

NME, 15 January 1994

As the US indie legends prepared to release their second album 'Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain', Simon Williams met Stephen Malkmus in London. Just don't mention the drummer. Photo: Stefan De Batselier

Christmas 1993. Down at the stoutly indie Totally Wired club in north London, seasonal celebrations are in full, sozzled swing as the packed dancefloor rumbles to the sound of one of the fresh new talents of the year. And the band rolling this particular wagon along? None other than The Bleeding Spin Doctors.

Nothing Is Cool. At least, not when '93 represents the year of MTV. What did you buy? Let's see now... Ah yes, the trashed metal of Alice In Chains; Pearl Jam, the rock beast that couldn't cope with its own voracious appetite; and Soul Asylum, the slowhand sloggers. And let's not forget Blind Melon, 4 Non Blondes, Stone Temples Arse. Even the so-called home favourites fucked up: Kurt whined about FAME; Evan whinged about being SHAGGABLE and tied himself to the (c)rack; Billy Corgan drove his Smashing Pumpkins to the verge of nervous breakdowns, while being not exactly CHEERY himself. Like I said, Nothing Is Cool...

...Except that hope is ambling over the horizon in the form of a band who (still) lack that six-figure sum to throw into the cathode ray cauldron; a band who rammed the 'under' back into the underground with some alarmingly obscure singles, a wayward sleeper of a debut album, 'Slanted And Enchanted', and a celebratory tour with spiritual mentors Sonic Youth. Sure, they may have sloped off to the back of your mind but over the next two months their new album and tour will make you remember just how absurdly essential they were. Shit, some things *are* still cool after all. And most of them are Pavement. And people will love them. Again.

"Yeah," drawls singer Steve Malkmus in laconic agreement. "Or else they'll say, 'Where the fuck is Gary?"

If it's no use crying over spilt milk, there's sure as hell no point in blubbing over split drummers, right? It is a bitterly cold Saturday in Shepherd's Bush. In a comfortable bistro Steve Malkmus ponders upon what is testament to the first *real* haemorrhage yet in the Pavement ranks. Believe you me, for a man who a) has only five quid in his pocket; b) has flown over alone for a mind-numbing European promotional jaunt; and c) has been forcibly dragged away from a hotel TV set showing a re-run of the Milan vs Norwich UEFA Cup match, this is an admirable display of togetherness. Hey, some of us are suffering around here! Not least, Gary Young.

"We're a lot more perverse without Gary" Stephen Malkmus

Think Gary and think 'Gazza'. When Pavement first came to these shores, Young was the stuntman: the handstands, the vodka-swigging, the tiddlywinks, the mad sorrowful eyes, the walks around Clapham Grand shaking punters' hands... all of this added up to Gary representing something ridiculous and REAL to grasp while the band scuttled and shambled, bemusing all and sundry.

Yet, as Lazio have discovered with the other Gazza, while the entertainer may be an amiable figure, at times capable of outrageous brilliance, he's also liable to scoot off the rails at the drop of a beanie hat. "It was the end of the road for him," says Steve, with the sigh of a man who's seen that joke stop being funny any more.

Basically, around springtime – just as Pavement's 'Westing (By Musket And Sextant)' compilation appeared – Steve and guitarist Scott 'Spiral Stairs' Kannberg were helping Gary build his studio in California where the band intended to record their next album. But the studio wasn't completed and Gary "wasn't finished psychologically enough to work", so they scrapped those plans and toured Australia, giving Gary "one more chance – again". Just like all the other times.

"We ended up in Denmark and he quit of his own accord," explains Malkmus, with no great degree of misery. "But he's quit before, so he never thought we'd agree to it because he thinks the band would be nothing without him.

"In his weird, '70s rock mind this was Emerson, Lake And Palmer or Led Zeppelin and the show *must* go on. But we said we were unhappy with his lifestyle [boozy excesses, ↦

Pavement in 1992: (l–r) Mark Ibold, Scott Kannberg, Gary Young, Stephen Malkmus and Bob Nastanovich

illness, erratic behaviour] and he knew in his heart of hearts it wasn't good for him. Also, he wanted to cash in, and when he found out we weren't going to do that he realised that the next tour was going to be the same…"

Enter new drummer Steve West, who was vice-president at the same high school as percussionist Bob Nastanovich – when the latter was president!

Unsurprisingly, Malkmus describes West as "more of a Charlie Watts than a Keith Moon", but will Pavement be a significantly more straightforward concern after this change?

"Oh we've grown up," beams the singer. "We're a lot *more* perverse without Gary now…"

True to Malkmus' claims, 'Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain' is a fuzzy, flurried, frequently excellent and occasionally downright FUNNY album. It's straighter than before (in the sense that Pavement have jettisoned the between-tracks trickery and non sequiturs of 'Slanted…'), but after the first couple of plays the abstract intentions of the sloping 'Heaven Is A Truck' and 'Cut Your Hair' crawl out like an intolerant schoolmaster to grab you by the collar and shake you around.

More significantly – especially for the passing indie freak – are the number of references to Pavement's peers scattered throughout the tracks: the likes of Smashing Pumpkins and Arse Temple Pilots are namedropped (clang!), while other unfortunates are seemingly given a good kicking via sneering references to drugs, 'careers' and other rawk indulgences. Cheers!

"We recorded the album in New York against my better instincts," says a woeful Malkmus. "I knew it would make us a little bit jaded, so we tried to keep it playful – we wanted to have more empathy with people that listen to music rather than people who play it.

'Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain' retains the post-Dinosaur Jr sizzle of old but now imbued with honky-tonk piano trickery, swerving from the anthemic desires of 'Fillmore Jive' to the Fall-esque grind of 'Hit The Plane Down'; from the wayward pop of 'Gold Soundz' to the even *more* wayward pop of 'Ell Ess Two'.

The point is, like Killdozer, Pavement are in a fine position to take the piss – because they're free from all the hang-ups currently strangling so many American heroes. Step forward yet again Kurt, Evan, and Billy C…

"We have to create the hang-ups in our lyrics, I guess," ponders Malkmus. "By baiting these bands and mentioning a couple of drug references [hear "*When they pull out the plugs/ And they snort all the drugs*", at the deathly close of the album], we're showing how tired and worn out those ideas are. It's like bands say, 'We've got long hair, we're so counterculture and dangerous,' so we try to make those things pass by having irony in there."

Pavement aren't on any great moral crusade here. This is just Steve Malkmus gently prodding the rock beast and telling it to, like, get a bit of a life, which is very much the Pavement way of doing things. It's suited them fine for the past four years, so why change now?

After all, while so many of their peers have leapt aboard the post-Nirvana corporate bandwagon, Pavement remain on Matador in the States and Big Cat over here, hence selling, oooh, "one-fifth" of what The Lemonheads shift back home – and not, as Gary Young apparently desired, 'cashing in'.

And yet, in spite of sticking to their alternative guns, the likes of Archers Of Loaf and Trumans Water have appeared to take the ramshackle Pavement ethos even further out there, undermining their predecessor's admirable credibility. *Touché*?

"I don't care," shrugs Malkmus calmly. "I never see other bands saying Pavement is their favourite band – they always say Royal Trux or Trumans Water, so I don't think we have that much credibility. But what can we do about it? We do our own thing, and so do Suede."

Of course, it's not all music biz in-jokes and anti-band jibes. As well as the slacker sensitivity and lovelorn poetry, 'Crooked Rain…' contains the great 'Unfair', which digs at the rich custodians of LA with the Lydonesque "*Burn the Hills of Beverly!*".

But for all of Pavement's shouting, they're hardly aiming to become the next Rage Against The Machine. For all their maverick tendencies, they're breezily capable of making an album with serious commercial potential. For all their scatterbrained creativity, there are astute methods in their madness. And for all their pimple-squeezing simplicity, they remain a mess of contradictions. Good.

Steve, you once said that you didn't want to keep swimming in the same pool as the Pixies, you wanted to dive deeper with the likes of Nico. Have you achieved that?

"Unfortunately not," he sighs. "Speaking in the linear progression of the group, just realising what our talents are, we were really trying to do the best album we could. But we didn't have the time, and I didn't have this weird psychedelic vision to commit to one type of music right now. We're still jumping around in this advertisement-age rock where we don't say where we stand exactly. Like, we can't go into total blues mode – other people are doing it better. So we're still kind of waiting…"

Don't forget kids: MTV's running on empty. And the moral of 1994 will be?

"Hey, it doesn't *matter* if it sounds perfect."

Precisely. ■

"I don't think we have that much credibility. We do our own thing"
Stephen Malkmus

What happened next?

The long and winding Pavement took unexpected twists

GROSS TELEVISION

Pavement released 'Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain' on February 2, 1994, hitting number 15 on the UK albums chart and receiving raves from critics. The band performed on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* and made another seminal TV appearance… on *Beavis & Butt-head*. The sneery ones were not fans: "Buttwipe music!"

LOLLAPA-LOSER

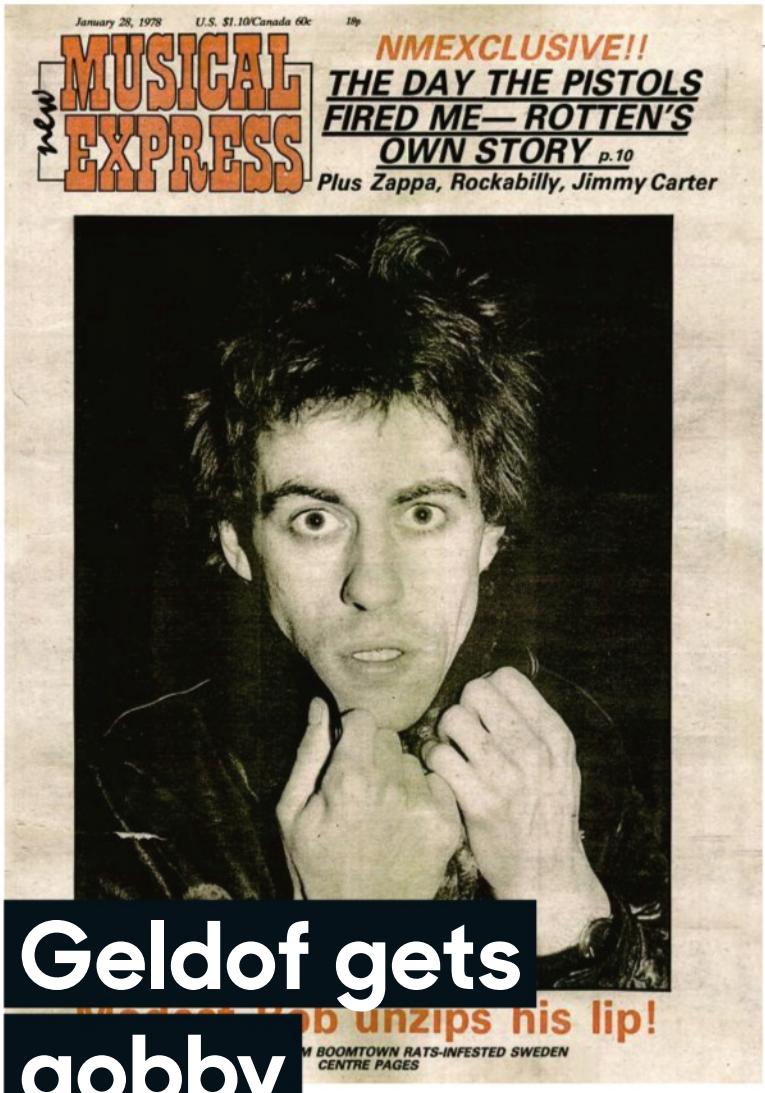
The lyrics to 'Range Life' appeared to take aim at grunge cash-ins Stone Temple Pilots and The Smashing Pumpkins: "*I don't understand what they mean and I could really give a fuck*". The latter headlined Lollapalooza that year and Billy Corgan threatened to pull their slot if Pavement were added to the bill.

EXCESS OF SUCCESS

In November 1994 Pavement started recording their third studio album, 'Wowee Zowee'. Much weirder and more erratic than its predecessor, Malkmus has since explained that they were actually just high as kites while making it. Its abandoned working title? 'Dick-Sucking School At Pussy-Licking School'.

ED SIRRS, CAMERA PRESS

THIS WEEK IN 1978



Geldof gets gobby

Touring Sweden with The Boomtown Rats, singer Bob Geldof lashes out at his punk peers

Flying with Bob Geldof and The Boomtown Rats to a snowy Sweden, *NME*'s Tom Cheyenne witnesses the band play a successful series of gigs. Initial concern from Bob over turnout at Dad's Dancing, the unusually named venue in Malmö, is quashed when 340 punters arrive, beating The Jam's 320 and The Clash's 300. In celebration, Bob leaves graffiti on the dressing room wall that reads: "Dear Joe and Rick, The Clash and The Jam are both out of date. Beware people who catch on to us. Love and peace, man, Bob." We find Geldof opinionated about everything from fame to record companies to gobbing at gigs, but conclude that this stems from "hard-headed rationalisation rather than mere arrogance". Despite his big rants, Geldof insists, "There isn't any huge philosophy embodied in what we are doing, short of one which has a tarnished reputation – that is, coming out of a gig thinking you've been to a party rather than a fucking political rally."

SEX PISTOLS SPLIT

After confusion following a bust-up the previous week, it is confirmed by Virgin Records that the Sex Pistols in their original form are over. Meanwhile, Johnny Rotten admits he has been kicked out and did not leave of his own accord as previously claimed. As the news reaches the press, Sid Vicious returns home after an alleged New York drug overdose and Paul Cook and Steve Jones visit Rio de Janeiro as guests of Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs.

RETURN TO OZ-ZY

In a surprise move, Ozzy Osbourne rejoins Black Sabbath as lead singer. After months of speculation he had ditched the group the previous year to pursue a solo career. The reunion comes after Osbourne's replacement, Dave Walker, was deemed unsuitable for the band and, following a "mutual decision", flew back to the States. Ozzy admits that as soon as he embarked on solo work he began to have second thoughts. "It was like getting a divorce", he says.

REVIEWED THIS WEEK

Dusty Springfield – 'A Love Like Yours'

"Revered '60s thrush makes long-overdue return to record-making with delightful Holland-Dozier-Holland song; pipes still in good nick, phrasing intact; arrangement and production by Roy Thomas Baker hideous."

■ CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

▶Mancunian new-wave poet John Cooper Clarke drops in to the *NME* office on the way to discuss a five-figure contract with record company CBS.

▶Mick Fleetwood continues his managerial career, hoping to play a part in relaunching "a recovered Peter Green".

▶Chicago's guitarist Terry Kath dies. Unaware that the gun he's been twirling at a party is loaded, he shoots himself by accident.

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DOES ROCK 'N' ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS? Vs THE FANS

WE FIND THE ROCK STAR, YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

Gus Unger-Hamilton

Alt-J singer and keyboard player

1 Which of your videos features a Rottweiler?
Imogen Warrington, Glasgow, via email
"Was it 'Fitzpleasure'?"
WRONG. 'Tessellate'. Why is there a Rottweiler?
"It was meant to be some sort of 'status dog' I think. You'll notice others in the scene are taking pot. It's an edgy video."

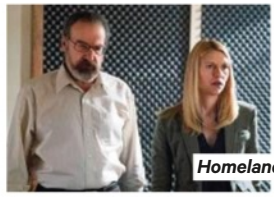
The video for 'Tessellate'

2 How many faces are there in the video for 'Matilda'?
Steven Granger, Nottingham, on Facebook
"Well, it's comprised of our four faces, and I guess the answer would be however many faces you can make out of that infinite blend of four faces."
CORRECT

3 According to Twitter, you mistook Rough Copy's name for what?
Regine Lopez, Scarborough, via email
"Oh! Erm... It was quite funny, it sounded like a person's name! Oh... I can't remember it now."
WRONG. Ralph Cuppy

4 In which song do you refer to *"broom-shaped pleasure"*?
Ronnie Wallinger, London, via email
"Well, that's gotta be 'Fitzpleasure'."
CORRECT. And what is *"broom-shaped pleasure"*?
"It's something Hubert Selby Jr describes in *Last Exit To Brooklyn*. Not in those exact words though. We credit Joe [Newman, vocals/guitar] with the specific expression."

5 'Fitzpleasure' has been used in three TV series. Can you name them?
Daniel Cragg, Cambridge, via email



Homeland

"*Sons Of Anarchy*? It's been in *Suits* and also... Ah, man. No, I don't know. I'm pretty sure it's been in *Sons Of Anarchy* though."
WRONG. *Weeds*, *Suits* and *Homeland*

6 'Buffalo' features on the soundtrack to which film?
Jake McEwan, London, via email
"*Silver Linings Playbook*."
CORRECT. Have you seen that movie?
"I watched it on a plane. 'Buffalo' is in there, but only briefly – which made it ineligible for the Oscar for Best Song. True story."

7 Can you name three of the acts you were up against for British Breakthrough Act at the Brit Awards in 2012?
Harriet Bennington, Southend, via email
"Three? Oh my god. Jake Bugg's got to be in there. Bastille? Oh no. I give up... I give up."
WRONG. Jake Bugg, Jessie Ware, Ben Howard and Rita Ora. How did you feel about not winning against that lot?
"It's fine. The worst thing that happened at the Brits was me losing a £4,000 three-piece suit that belonged to a PR company. One of my housemates thought it was rubbish and threw it out."

Leona Lewis

8 What shape appears at the very end of the music video for 'Something Good'?
Laura Collins, Birmingham, on Twitter
"Which shape? Well, that's gotta be a triangle."
CORRECT. What's the significance?
"We have a thing for triangles."

9 At the G8 summit earlier this year, David Cameron gave a USB mixtape – which included Alt-J – to Barack Obama and other world leaders. Can you name two of the other artists that featured on it?
Theresa James, London, via email
"Jake Bugg and Emeli Sandé must be on there."
WRONG. Jake Bugg, Laura Mvula, Lianne La Havas, Ben Howard, Gabrielle Aplin, Tom Odell, Rudimental feat. John Newman, Birdy and Conor Maynard
"What?! Are you sure Emeli Sandé isn't on there?"

10 Which *X Factor* winner has said that they would "love to work with Alt-J"?
Oliver Gregory, Coventry, via email
"Was it Alexandra Burke?"
WRONG. It was Leona Lewis
"She said that? Terrific. If she wanted to collaborate with us I'm sure we wouldn't rule it out. We think collaboration is important and is often most successful when it's unexpected."

SCORE = 4

"I've let a lot of people down today. It's not going to be an easy 2014."

WORDS: HUW NESBITT PHOTOS: DEAN CHALKELY, REX, TOM MARTIN

NEXT WEEK

Join us on a shameless nostalgia trip back to one of the greatest years in music history...

1994

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- Superfood
- Foster The People
- Tame Impala

ALBUM REVIEWS

- Bombay Bicycle Club
- Arthur Beatrice
- Maximo Park
- The Family Rain
- Breton

CAUGHT LIVE

- Fucked Up
- Waxahatchee
- Stephen Malkmus
- Warpaint
- Circa Waves

NME

Quiz answers: 1. The Wedding Present **2.** 'Some Kind Of Bliss' **3.** Ride/Hurricane #1 **4.** One **5.** Neil Young **6.** Anthony Kiedis of Red Hot Chili Peppers **7.** PJ Harvey **8.** Loose Tapestries **9.** Ray Charles **10.** 'Love Spreads' **11.** Green Day's Tré Cool **12.** Bombay Bicycle Club **13.** David Bowie **14.** The Maccabees **15.** False

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